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No. 311 (New Series), Vol. 6. March 5, 1938

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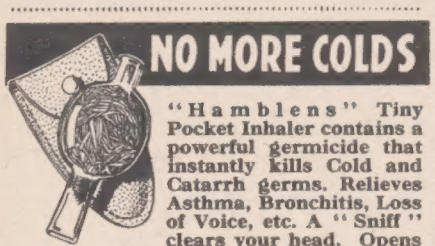

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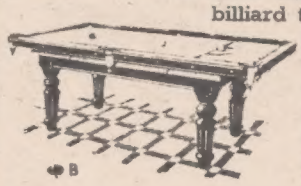

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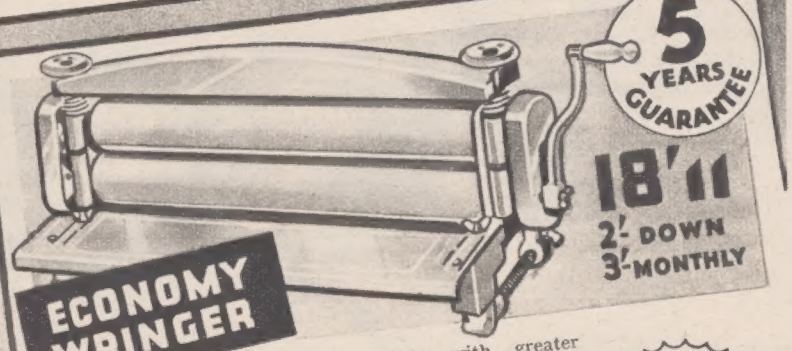

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The **PASSING SHOW** No. 311. Vol. 6. March 5, 1938

CATTLE COUNTRY TROUBLE

Telling of the quiet heroism of a man and woman who had the courage to meet life without flinching, no matter what it might bring

BY ERNEST HAYCOX

ILLUSTRATED BY SINCLAIR CALOW

He moved his fingers up to the pocket of his shirt and dropped them immediately away, searching the smoky horizon with his glance

THEY reached Two Dance around ten that morning and turned into the big lot between the courthouse and the Cattle King Hotel. Most of the homesteaders camped here when they came to town, for after a slow ride across the sage flats, underneath so hot and so yellow a sun, the shade of the huge locust tree was a comfort. Joe Blount unhitched and watered the horses and tied them to a pole. He was a long and loose and deliberate man who had worked with his hands too many years to waste motion, and if he dallied more than usual over his chores now it was because he dreaded the thing ahead of him.

His wife sat on the wagon's seat, changing the baby. She had a pin in her mouth and she was talking around it, to young Tom : "Stay away from the horses on the street and don't you go near the railroad tracks. Keep hold of May's hand. She's too little to be alone, you remember. Be sure to come back by noon."

Young Tom was seven and getting pretty thin from growth. The trip to town had him excited. He kept nodding his sun-bleached head, he kept tugging at little May's hand and then both of them ran headlong for the street and turned the corner of the Cattle King, shrilly whooping as they disappeared.

Blount looked up at his wife. She was a composed woman and not one to bother people with talk and sometimes it was hard for a man to know what was on her mind. But he knew what was there now, for all their problems were less than this one and they had gone over it pretty thoroughly the last two-three months. He moved his fingers up to the pocket of his shirt and dropped them immediately away, searching the smoky horizon with his glance. He didn't expect to see anything over there, but it was better than meeting her eyes at this moment. He said, in his patiently low vioce : "Think we could make it less than three hundred?"

The baby moved its arms, its warm-wet fingers aimlessly brushing Hester Blount's cheeks. She said: "I don't see how. We kept figuring—and it never gets smaller. You know best, Joe."

"No," he murmured, "it never gets smaller. Well, three hundred. That's what I'll ask for." And yet, with the chore before him, he kept his place by the dropped wagon's tongue. He put his hands in his pockets and drew a long breath and looked at the powdered earth below him with a sustained gravity, and was like this when Hester Blount spoke again. He noticed that she was pretty gentle with her words. "Why, now, Joe, you go on. It isn't like you were shiftless and hadn't tried. He knows you're a hard worker and he knows your word's good. You just go ahead."

"Guess we've both tried," he agreed. "And I guess he knows how it's been. We ain't alone." He went out toward the street, reminding himself of this. They weren't alone. All the people along Christmas Creek were burnt out, so it wasn't like he had failed because he didn't know how to farm. The thought comforted him a good deal, it restored a little of his pride. Crossing the street toward Dunmire's stable he met Chess Roberts, with whom he had once punched cattle on the Hat outfit, and he stopped in great relief and palavered with Chess for a good ten minutes until, looking back, he saw his wife still seated on the wagon. The sight vaguely troubled him and he drawled to Chess, "Well, I'll see you later," and turned quite slowly towards the bank.

There was nothing in the bank's old fashioned room to take a man's attention. Yet, when he came into its hot shaded silence, Joe Blount removed his hat and felt ill at ease as he walked towards Lane McKercher. There was a pine desk here and on the wall a railroad map showing the counties of the Territory in colours. Over at the other side of the room stood the cage where McKercher's son waited on the trade.

McKercher was big and bony and grey and his eyes could cut. They were that penetrating, as everybody agreed. "Been a long time since you came to town. Sit down and have a talk," and his glance saw more about Joe Blount than the homesteader himself could ever tell. "How's Christmas Creek?"

Blount settled in the chair. He said, "Why, just fine," and laid his hands over the held hat. Weather had darkened him and work had thinned him and gravity remained like a stain on his cheeks. He was, McKercher recalled, about thirty years old, had once worked as a puncher on Hat and had married a girl from a small ranch over in the Yellows. Thirty wasn't so old, yet the country was having its way with Joe Blount. When he dropped his head the skin around his neck formed a loose crease and his mouth had that half-severe expression which comes from too much trouble. This was what McKercher saw. This, and the blue army shirt washed and mended until it was as thin as cotton; and the man's long hard hands lying so loose before him.

McKercher said, "A little dry over your way?"

"Oh," said Blount, "a little. Yeah, a little bit dry."

The banker sat back and waited and the silence ran on a long while. Blount moved around in the chair and lifted his hands and reversed the hat on his lap. His eyes touched McKercher and passed quickly on to the ceiling. He stirred again, not comfortable. One hand reached up to the pocket of his shirt, dropping quickly back.

"Something on your mind, Joe?"

"Why," said Blount, "Hester and I have figured it out pretty close. It would take about three hundred dollars until next crop. Don't see how it could be less. There'd be seed and salt for stock and grub to put in and I guess some clothes for the kids. Seems like a lot but we can't seem to figure it any smaller."

"A loan?" said McKercher.

"Why, yes," said Blount, relieved that the explaining was over.

"Now let's see. You've got another year to go before you get title to your place. So that's no security. How was your wheat?"

(*please turn over*)

"Burnt out. No rain over there in April."

"How much stock?"

"Well, not much. Just two cows. I sold off last fall. The graze was pretty skinny." He looked at McKercher and said in the briefest way. "I got nothing to cover this loan. But I'm a pretty good worker."

McKercher turned his eyes toward the desk. There wasn't much to be seen behind the cropped grey whiskers of his face. According to the country this was why he wore them—so that a man could never tell what he figured. But his shoulders rose and dropped and he spoke regretfully. "There's no show for you on that ranch, Joe. Dry farming—it won't do. All you fellows are burnt out. This country never was meant for it. It's cattle land and that's about all."

He let it go like that, and waited for the homesteader to come back with a better argument. Only, there was no argument. Joe Blount's lips changed a little and his hands flattened on the peak of his hat. He said in a slow, mild voice. "Well, I can see it your way all right," and got up. His hand strayed up to the shirt pocket again, and fell away—and McKercher, looking straight into the man's eyes, saw an expression there hard to define. The banker shook his head. Direct refusal was on his tongue and it wasn't like him to postpone it, which he did. "I'll think it over. Come back about two o'clock."

"Sure," said Blount and turned across the room, his long frame swinging loosely, his knees springing as he walked, saving energy. After he had gone out of the place McKercher remembered the way the homesteader's hand had gone toward the shirt pocket. It was a gesture that remained in the banker's mind.

Blount stopped outside the bank. Hester, at this moment, was passing down towards the dry good's store with the baby in her arms. He waited until she had gone into the store and then walked on toward the lower end of town, not wanting her to see him just then. He knew McKercher would turn him down at two o'clock. It had been in the banker's tone and he was thinking of all the things he meant to explain to McKercher. He was telling McKercher that one or two bad years shouldn't count against a man. That the land on Christmas Creek would grow the best winter wheat in the world. That you had to take the dry with the wet. But he knew he'd never say any of this. The talk wasn't in him, and never had been. Young Tom and little May were over the street, standing in front of Swing's restaurant, seeing something that gripped their interest. Joe Blount looked at them from beneath the lowered brim of his hat; they were skinny with age and they needed some clothes. He went on by, coming against Chess Roberts near the saloon.

Chess said: "Well, we'll have a drink on this."

The smell of the saloon drifted out to Joe Blount, its odour of spilled whiskey and tobacco smoke started the saliva in his jaws, freshening a hunger. But Hester and the kids were on his mind and something told him it was unseemly, the way things were. He said: "Not right now, Chess. I got some chores to tend. What you doing?"

"You ain't heard? I'm riding for Hat again."

Blount said: "Kind of quiet over my way. Any jobs for a man on Hat?"

"Not now," said Chess. "We been layin' off summer help. A little bit tough this year, Joe. You havin' trouble on Christmas Creek?"

"Me? Not a bit, Chess. We get along. It's just that I like to keep workin'."

After Chess had gone, Joe Blount laid the point of his shoulder against the saloon wall and watched his two children walk hand in hand past the windows of the general store. Young Tom pointed and swung his sister round; and both of them had their faces against a window, staring in. Blount pulled his eyes away. It took the kids to do things that scraped a man's pride pretty hard, that made him feel his failure. Under the saloon's board awning lay shade, but sweat cracked through his forehead and he thought quickly of what he could do. Maybe Dunmire could use a man to break horses. Maybe he could get on hauling wood for the feed store This was Saturday and the big ranch owners would be coming down to the Two Dance grade pretty soon. Maybe there was a hole on one of those outfits. It was an hour until noon, and at noon he had to go back to Hester. He turned toward the feed store.

Hester Blount stood at the drygood's counter of Vetten's store. Vetten came over but she said, "I'm just trying to think." It was warm in here, but shadowed, and the smell of all the bolts of cloth and furnishings and fabrics was pleasant to a person who hadn't set foot in a store for six months. She laid the baby on the counter and watched it lift its feet straight in the air and aimlessly try to catch them with its hands; and she was thinking that the family needed a good many things. Underwear all round, and stockings, and overalls.

Little May had to have some material for a dress, and some ribbon. You couldn't let a girl grow up without a few pretty things, even out on Christmas Creek. It wasn't good for the girl. Copper-toed shoes for young Tom, and a pair for his father; and lighter buttoned ones for May. None of these would be less than two dollars and a half, and it was a crime the way it mounted up. And plenty of flannel for the baby.

She had not thought of herself until she saw the dark grey bolt of silk lying at the end of the counter, and when she saw it, something happened to her heart. She went over and rubbed the silk's heavy surface between her fingers, feeling its luxury. It wasn't good to be so poor that the sight of a piece of silk made you feel this way. She turned from it, ashamed of her thoughts—as though she had been guilty of extravagance. Maybe if she were young again and still pretty, and wanting to catch a man's eyes, it might not be so silly to think of clothes. But she was no longer young or pretty and she had her man. She could take out her love of nice things on little May, who was going to be a very attractive girl. As soon as Joe was sure of the three hundred dollars she'd come back here and get what they all had to have—and somehow squeeze out enough for the dress material and the hair ribbon. She stood here thinking of these things, and so many others—a tall and rather comely woman in her early thirties, dark-faced and carrying an even, sweet-lipped gravity while her eyes sought the drygoods shelves and her hand unconsciously patted the baby's round middle.

A woman came bustling into the store and said in a loud, accented voice: "Why, Hester Blount, of all the people I never did expect to see!"

Hester said, "Now isn't this a surprise," and the two took each other's hands and fell into a quick half embrace. Ten years ago they had been girls together over in the Two Dance, Hester and this Lila Evenson who had married a town man. Lila was turning into a heavy woman, and like many heavy women she loved white and wore it now, though it made her look big as a house. Above the tight collar of the dress, her skin was a flushed red and a second chin faintly trembled when she talked. Hester Blount stood motionless, listening to that outpour of words, feeling the quick search of Lila's eyes. Lila, she knew, would be taking everything in—her worn dress, her heavy shoes, and the lines of her face.

"And another baby!" said Lila and bent over it and made a long gurgling sound. "What a lucky woman. That's three? But ain't it a problem, out there on Christmas Creek? Even in town here I worry so much over my one darling."

"No," said Hester, "we don't worry. How is your husband?"

"So well," said Lila. "You know, he's bought the drugstore from old Kerrin who is getting old. He has done so well. We are lucky, as we keep telling ourselves. And that reminds me. You must come up to dinner. You really must come this minute."

They had been brought up on adjoining ranches and had ridden to the same school and to the same dances. But that was so long ago, and so much had changed them. And Lila was always a girl to throw her fortune in other people's faces. Hester said, gently, regretfully: "Now isn't it too bad. We brought a big lunch in the wagon, thinking it would be easier. Joe has so many chores to do here."

"I have often wondered about you, away out there," said Lila. "Have you been well? It's been such a hard year for everybody. So many homesteaders going broke."

"We are well," said Hester slowly, a small hard pride in her tone. "Everything's been fine."

"Now that's nice," murmured Lila, her smile remaining fixed; but her eyes, Hester observed, were sharp and busy—and reading too much. Lila said, "Next time you must come and see us," and bobbed her head and went out of the store, her clothes rustling in the quiet. Hester's lips went

sharp-shut and quick colour burned on her cheeks. She took up the baby and turned into the street again and saw that Joe hadn't come yet to the wagon. The children were out of sight and there was nothing to do but wait. Hearing the far off halloo of a train's whistle, she walked on under the board galleries to the depot.

Heat swirled round her and light flashed up from polished spots on the iron rails. The flat valley ran empty and sage-studded into the far away Mauvaise hills and the sky above was the unmarred blue of a robin's egg. Around her lay the full monotony of the desert, so familiar, so wide—and sometimes so hard to bear. Backed against the yellow depot wall she watched the train rush forward, a high plume of white steam rising to the sky as it whistled to warn them. And then it rushed by, engine and cars, in a great smash of sound that stirred the baby in her arms. She saw men standing on the platforms. Women's faces showed in the car windows, serene and idly curious and not a part of Hester's world at all; and afterwards the train was gone, leaving behind the superheated smell of steel and smoke. When the quiet came back it was lonelier than before. She watched that line of cars until it had dwindled to a faint point in the far sage. Then turned back to the wagon.

It was then almost twelve. The children came up, hot and weary and full of excitement. Young Tom said: "The school is right in town. They don't have to walk at all. It's right next to the houses. Why don't they have to walk three miles like us?" And May said, "I saw a china doll with real clothes and painted eyelashes. Can I have a china doll?"

Hester changed the baby on the wagon's seat. She said: "Walking is good for people, Tom. Why should you expect a doll now, May? Christmas is the time. Maybe Christmas we'll remember."

"Well, I'm hungry."

"Wait till your father comes," said Hester.

When he turned in from the street, later, she knew something was wrong. He was always a deliberate man, not much given to smiling. But he walked with his shoulders down and when he came up he only said: "I suppose we ought to eat." He didn't look directly at her. He had his own strong pride and she knew this wasn't like him—to stand by the wagon's wheel, so oddly watching his children. She reached under the seat for the box of sandwiches and the cups and the jug of cold coffee. She said: "What did he say, Joe?"

"Why, nothing yet. He said come back at two. He wanted to think about it."

She murmured, "It won't hurt us to wait," and laid out the sandwiches. They sat on the shaded ground and ate, the children with a quick, starved impatience, with an excited and aimless talk. Joe Blount looked at them carefully. "What was it you saw in the restaurant, sonny?"

"It smelled nice," said young May. "The smell came out the door."

Joe Blount cleared his throat. "Don't stop like that in front of the restaurant again."

"Can we go now? Can we go down by the depot?"

"You hold May's hand," said Blount, and watched them leave. He sat crosslegged before his wife, his big hands idle, his expression unstirred. The sandwich, which was salted bacon grease spread on Hester's potato bread, lay before him. "Ain't done enough this morning to be hungry," he said.

"I know."

They were never much at talking. Sometimes at night, before bedtime, they sat by the kitchen table, and spoke of things to be done and things they might like to do. But they were humble people and

He had his own strong pride and she knew this wasn't like him—to stand by the wagon's wheel, so oddly watching his children. She said, "What did he say, Joe?"

the years had made them shy of asking too much. And now there wasn't much to say. She knew that he had been turned down. She knew that at two o'clock he would go and come back, empty handed. Until then she wouldn't speak of it, and neither would he. And she was thinking with a woman's realism of what lay before them. They had nothing except this team and wagon and two cows standing unfed in the barn lot. Going back to Christmas Creek now would be going back only to pack up and leave. For they had delayed asking for this loan until the last sack of flour in the storehouse had been emptied.

He said: "I been thinking. Not much to do on the ranch this fall. I ought to get a little outside work."

"Maybe you should."

"Fact is, I've tried a few places. Kind of quiet. But I can look around some more."

She said: "I'll wait here."

He got up, a rangy, spare man who found it hard to be idle. He looked at her carefully and his voice didn't reveal anything. "If I were you I don't believe I'd order anything at the stores until I come back."

She watched the way he looked out into the smoky horizon, the way he held his shoulders. When he turned away, not meeting his eyes, her lips made a sweet line across her dark face, a softly maternal expression showing. She said, "Joe," and waited until he turned. "Joe, we'll always get along."

He went away again, around the corner of the Cattle King. She shifted her position on the wagon's seat, her hand gently patting the baby who was a little cross from the heat. One by one she went over the list of necessary things in her mind, and one by one erased them. It was hard to think of little May without a ribbon bow in her hair, without a good dress. Boys could wear old clothes, as long as they were warm; but a girl, a pretty girl, needed the touch of niceness. It was hard to be poor.

Coming out of the bank at noon, Lane McKercher looked into the corral space and saw the Blounts eating their lunch under the locust tree. He turned down Arapahoe street, walking through the comforting shade of the poplars to the big square house at the end of the lane. A picket fence ran its neat white line all around the place and a gilt weather vane on the top of the roof flashed in the sun, pointing west, whence long ago the last wind had come. At dinner hour his boy took care of the bank and so he ate his meal with the housekeeper in a dining-room, whose shades had been tightly drawn—the heavy midday meal of a man who had developed his hunger and his physique from early days on the range. Afterwards he walked to the living room couch and lay down with a paper over his face for the customary nap.

A single fly made a racket in the deep quiet, but it was not this that kept him from sleeping. In some obscure manner the shape of Joe Blount came before him—the long, patient and work-stiffened shape of a man whose eyes had been so blue and so calm in face of refusal. Well, there had been something behind those eyes for a moment, and then it had passed away, eluding McKercher's sharp glance.

They were mostly all patient ones and seldom-speaking—these men that came off the deep desert. A hard life had made them that way, as McKercher knew, who had shared that life himself. Blount was no different from the others and many times McKercher had refused these others, without afterthoughts. It was some other thing that kept his mind on Blount. Not knowing why, he lay quietly on the couch, trying to find the reason. The country, he told himself, was cattle country, and those who tried to dry farm it were bound to fail. He had seen them fail, year after year. They took their wagons and their families out toward Christmas

(*please turn to page* 30)

WHISTLE FOR YOUR WINNINGS

An Irishman's yarn of a runnin' dawg that involves a widdy woman, a trusting trainer and a firm belief in betting only on a certainty

BY KINGSLEY LONG

ILLUSTRATED BY S. TRESILIAN

"UPON me sowl," said Terry Sullivan, "it's robbing me you are! I told you I'd nivver played this child's game before but about twice in me loife. And, just the same for that, I'll take a sovereign to tin bob I bate ye even now."

I had not seen the little Irish-American ex-jockey for nearly twelve months and certainly never expected to meet him in that out-of-the-way country pub on a grand racing day. But I'm not too bad at darts. It was my turn and I needed only the "double three" while Terry had "thirteen to crack." I said: "Done with you, Terry," took careful aim, and put my first dart into the nineteen.

"Bust!" said Terry, "and mortal hard luck!"

He flicked one dart neatly into the three and a second unerringly into the "double five."

"Cud ye believe that now?" he exclaimed modestly, as he pocketed my note. "All over in two t'rows and me a novice at the game! It just goes to show what I've told you before that there's no certainty in any kind of gamble."

The drinks went with the game as well as the bet, and I called bitterly for two bitters, but Terry changed his mind and made his a "double Irish."

"If your own grand-mother were to lend you half a crown out of a pound note, Terry," said I, "it's my belief you'd take it and short change her for five shillings. As for 'cers,' you've tried to sell *me* one often enough! Has the turf got too hot for you altogether? Or have you taken to doping dogs instead of gee-gees?"

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Dogs is ut? (said Terry Sullivan) an' me the cliverest horse doctor in two continents! But it's a quare thing you should have mintioned the subject for I'll not deny that I have been experiminting wid this paltry imitation of real racing.

There's more crookedness on the dog tracks than in anny other sport I can call to mind and, worse than that, it's mortal hard to get on the inside of ut. The dog, mind ye, is the frind of man, but he's a dumb baste at that. Maybe you've heard that there *are* ways to stop a dog, but they're all unreliable, what wid vets and stewards and trainers all as nosey as iliphants before and after each race. No; gimme a good jock ivery time. Why, I knew one out in Miami who would stop a favourite even if he had to rise in his stirrups and pull the poor baste's neck off under the judge's nose. And whin you have a loyal lad like that up it gives you confidence.

Dogs are different. They have no sinse of proportion, and they run to win not caring a cuss whether the owner has put his money down or not. And what I say is, whin a man has to deal with honest folk or honest bastes, why honesty is the best policy all the time.

Being warned off the turf in sivin different countries, I was rejuiced a while back to trying annything for a living, and I ran into a widdy woman wid a nice pub and a sporting timperamint. Wearing nothing but her woollies, I would say that Mollie tipped the beam at fourteen stone, but the weight was well spread in the right places, and she had a deep rich voice and a foine rich chuckle and a grand roving eye for anny man that was a man. She gave me the length of a long slate at her pub and by and by we was as thick as two thieves.

Though she was making good money out of her other customers, Molly was spinding a lot of the profits on dogs. Not backing thim, ye understand, but owning thim and running thim, which seemed crazy to me. After I got to know her well I found she had one brindled baste, a pup, wid a great heart and more sinse than most. He ran cliver and he niver fought, but he just wasn't fast enough to be in the big money at the big meetings.

Still, there's tracks and tracks, and a lot of dough changing hands at all of thim. At last, whin the score on the slate was so heavy against me that even Molly was growing short timpered, I tuk her aside wan day and I said that something might be done with a dog like that if we cud change his colour a little and run him like new on a smaller track.

Nivver mind how it was done. I'm only telling you that pretty soon there was a brown dog called "Merry Milestone"—and *that* wasn't his name either!—entered to run at a little track that maybe you've never even heard of. He was handed over to proper trainers by this time, but I'd looked after him for siveral weeks in the meanwhile, and I'd taught him just one trick, hoping it might be useful but not sure in me moind how to put it over.

Molly was plain uneasy about this dog. She liked to win well enough, whin she thought she was on a good thing, and small blame to her! Why, there's men I know who like to win so much they'll not hesitate to take tin bob off a poor fellow who moight be playing a game of darts wid them almost for the first toime in his loife . . . Since ye're so pressing make it another double Irish, Miss. . . .

Where was I now in me story? Ah, yes, I was saying iverybody likes to win, but not iverybody is ready to take a sporting risk, and Molly, not knowing the artist I am, was scared about this painted dog of hers. Just the same, we let Merry Milestone run on the new track, and we cleaned up a little packet backing him, though the odds were scandalous short. Six to four was all we cud get to our money on account of the trainer—bad cess to him!—having tried the baste out beforehand and telling all his pals there was nothing on that track to bate him in the novice class.

That wasn't the worst of it. I bet with siveral bookies, but when I came to draw my money off wan of them, Alf Bloggins by name, he gave me a dhirty look and I cud see he remimbered me. "That's a good dog you backed, Terry," said he, paying me out. "He reminds me of another dog that used to run on another track. If I gave my mind to it, I might remember the name."

"Pwhat's in a name, Alf?" I came back, for I knew the old blayguard had me taped. "I wouldn't puzzle me head about a little thing like that, if I was you. I'd talk things over wid an old friend one day instid and maybe you might have a good race *next* time he runs."

An' so t'was fixed between us without another word said. 'Tis strange how many crooks there are who won't *let* a man run honest no matter how he tries. Whin we were back at her pub, I had to tell Molly all about Alf Bloggins, and right away the poor foolish woman was frightened out of her wits and swearing she must get rid of the dog even if she had to poison him.

"Listen," I said to her, "maybe we shall have to cut old Alf in on the profits, but Merry Milestone has his next race in the bag. Are ye wanting to *t'row* away money, Molly?" I said. "And have ye no gratitude to the frinds who have helped you?"

"*Frinds!*" said she, laughing in a way I didn't like at all. "Frinds! That reminds me that I'll be troubling you to settle your score out of your winnings. And you can do it right now. As for the next race, what use is it to have it in the bag when we may all be pinched before it comes off and, even if we're not, the dog's sure to start at about three to one on?"

It seems to me sometimes that there's no such thing as trust annywhere these days and I was hurt in me feelings to have this fine widdy woman act so suspicious of me.

"Wan moment, Molly," I said to her. "Supposing I could fix things for you to place all your bits at two to one or even better, would you run him just wance more?"

I cud see she was timpted, but all women are narrow-minded, and she still kept harping about the trifling matter of the score on the slate. And so in the ind I had to tell her what was in me moind and persuade her I would need all my money to play up on this last bit of business.

"All right, Terry," she said at last, "if you can show me and Alf Bloggins that you can do what you say, I'll let your score stand over till after the race. But if you let me down, then, Hivin help a poor weak widdy woman! I'll break ivery bone in your body in two places and sue you for your just debts while you're still in hospital."

She wud have done it, too, grand frindly creature that she was. Indade, it was just that streak of timperamint in her that made me change me plans at the last moment. She seemed to believe in Alf Bloggins more than she did in me, and I thought it would be better for the pair of thim to row in together.

There were a couple of weeks to go before the next race, and Merry Milestone's trainer made no objection to the owner walking her dog out wan morning. Molly and me fetched the dog, and we had asked old Alf Bloggins to meet us on a bit of common land a long way out of town.

It was thin I showed thim the little trick I had taught the baste while he was still a brindle. He

would run to a handkerchief just like a whippet, and Molly hild him while Alf wint down the common with the handkerchief. I stud about half-way beside a gorse bush wid a little whistle in me hand. Molly slipped the dog and off he wint like a flash. I nivver made a sound that she or Alf cud hear, but whin the dog came level wid me he put on the brakes so hard he skidded on the grass and then came loping up to me as good as gold.

Alf was mopping his forehead wid excitement when he and Molly came up to where I was standing. "Blimey!" said old Alf, "I've seen 'em doped and I've seen 'em painted. I've seen 'em over-fed and over-watered, and I've seen their toes buttered. But I never saw a dog stopped before by a whistle that you can't hear. Could you do it again?"

"Sure, I cud do it again," said I. "I cud do it as often as you like. Why you could do it yourself, me dear man. I'll hold the handkerchief this time and let Molly slip him. You just blow the whistle."

Merry Milestone stopped just the same for Alf as he had for me, and Molly and Alf was both satisfied. Both of them mark you, was ready to be plain dishonest wid an honest dog. And both of thim reckoned they had a certainty.

This was the way we had things planned. On the day of the race Alf and all his friends were going to lay against Merry Milestone to anything that was on offer. Most of the punters' money was due to go on our baste annyway wid his form so much exposed, and if the bookies in the know were a little generous with the odds they could lay him to pounds, shillings and pence. The more they tuk, the more they would make because they mint to stop the poor baste wid the silent whistle just after the second bend.

Molly and me was each to get tin per cint of the bookies' winnings for our share and, what's more, we cud help ourselves on the Tote to a nice win on The Fiddler, which, according to old Alf, was the only other dog in the race wid a ghost of a chance. It was all cut and dried bar the shouting.

Alf would not trust me to blow the whistle on the night itself, because, he said, if Merry Milestone was actually to see me he might not only stop but jump right over the barrier to answer my call. Whereas, he said, if he put one of his own boys on the job, the dog would simply stop and be lost to find a frindly face. I did not care for the way he made this excuse, but it did not matter anny way, seeing that I might want to be free to work on my own account right up to the off.

So whin the big night came along at last I met Alf and one of his lads outside the track and I handed thim over the little whistle and they tried it out and iverything was in order. And we went on to the track wid all set for the big clean-up.

(Terry Sullivan, whose glass was empty again, seemed to think it necessary to whet his own whistle before resuming this narrative. I gave the necessary order, and he proceeded.)

You'll be thinking, maybe, that this was a quare whistle I had, and I'm not blaming ye, though 'tis well known among the poacher lads. It looked more like a water squirt than annything else I can call to mind, and there was a little plug to the ind of it that a man cud pull out. The further he pulled it, the shriller was the note, until at last I'm telling ye there was no sound at all, at all.

No sound, that is, that anny man cud hear. But a dog cud hear ut. A dog is a dumb baste, but it is not deaf, and Merry Milestone cud hear that whistle like it was the Flying Scot coming out of a tunnel even when the plug was pulled so far there wasn't a whisper to reach the human ear. Old Alf's lad tried the thing out before we parted, and sure the note rose to a thin scream and thin died away altogether just like I had said. It was rather like thim ultra-violent rays that will shine t'rough a man's chest to his backbone and still show no light at all.

Merry Milestone was going in the third race, and he was drawn Number Three, which was his favourite trap. Barring The Fiddler, he was the only dog in the race that even *looked* worth backing, and Molly, who was standing by me side at the time, said, "Oh, Terry! It's a shame to stop him, so it is! But we need the money and don't you go wasting all of yours on The Fiddler because there's no certainty in racing, and you'll get enough from Alf to pay my score without risking a penny of your own money."

Me heart was almost softening at the time, for I hate to be hard wid anny woman, let alone a widdy, but what wid her keeping on talking about my bit of a score on the slate and telling *me*—Terry Sullivan—that there's no certainty in racing, I would not give way to my natural sintiments, and I only said to her: "Sure, Molly, and mind you follow your own advice. Be content wid your percintage," said I, "an' leave The Fiddler alone to play his own tune."

I hope that's what she did, but there's no knowing with anny skirt. I lost sight of her mesilf because I had a bit of business to arrange wid some other frinds of mine who were putting some money on for me that I did not care to put on mesilf.

It was a grand betting race. The mugs were just flocking round the bookies to back Merry Milestone, and even the wans that *knew* he was dead meat, like Alf Bloggins himself, hilped thimsilves to a flock of dough at even money. They didn't begin to open out until the first rush was over and thin, being greedy, they asked for more and lengthened the odds from six to four to two to one and at last three to one against. That was whin the bhoys who was investing my own money for me stipped in and made their bets.

You're right. It was Merry Milestone I backed and no ither dog. Actually, owing to this fix, The Fiddler was favourite at the start, though our dog carried three quarters of the entire business. Whin the hare came round, all six of the dogs got away like greased lightning wid The Fiddler jumping into the lead and just beating Merry Milestone to it at the first bend. But my dog niver ran wide. He steadied himself for second place and thin went all out in the next stretch to take the second bend in the lead and on the rails.

He steadied himself for second place and thin went all out in the next stretch to take the second bend in the lead on the rails. Just beyond there I cud see through my glasses old Alf's lad on the rails, holding a handkerchief to his face to hide the whistle and blowing it fit to burst. Merry Milestone tuk no notice. He niver so much as checked

Just beyond there I cud see through my glasses old Alf's lad on the rails, holding a handkerchief to his face to hide the whistle and blowing fit to burst. Merry Milestone tuk no notice. He niver so much as checked, and he came home, winning by a couple of lengths. Or so they tell me.

But I didn't stop to see the finish mesilf. I was beating the record for a getaway from that track before poor old Alf Bloggins and his pals had stopped rubbing their eyes. I nivver even heard them start to swear, and they tell me they was muttering loud and lamentable right up to the off of the next race. As for Molly, I just hate to think what she might have said—and done—if I had stopped to collogue wid her after that race was over.

And so you see, me bhoy, honesty *is* the best policy, after all, and there is no certainty in racing, not even whin you think you've got wan frozen stiff.

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"Look here, Terry," said I, after a long pause, "I know you well enough to know you double-crossed Alf Bloggins and the widow. I can understand how you made them think Merry Milestone would stop when he heard 'the silent whistle.' But why the devil *didn't* he stop? How did you know he would go on running?"

"You shouldn't bet money on *annything*, me bhoy, not even darts!" replied Terry, pityingly. "You've no imagination at all, at all. Listen, can you tell wan black cat from another on a pitch dark night? Can you pick the tune in me moind whin I purse me lips and don't blow? Av coorse ye cannot. An' that's how it was wid Merry Milestone, poor dumb baste. For the whistle I handed to Alf's lad was just like me own, but for wan thing. Whin you pulled the plug out to the limit, it didn't whistle at all—not even wan of thim ultra-violent whistles. At the top note it stopped making any sound whativer—not even a ghost screech that a dog cud hear."

Attention turned quickly to the smiling Acker. He ran mightily towards the springboard and leapt high. His body resolved itself into a spinning ball

ONE SOMERSAULT TOO MANY

SHORT SHORT STORY

of an acrobat whose revenge was not quite as well timed as his falls

BY NARD JONES

ILLUSTRATED BY ERIC PARKER

THERE were many in the profession who wished that Acker would attempt a triple somersault. Circus history has proved that a triple somersault is nearly always fatal—if not the first time, then certainly the second or third.

A double somersault was enough. Plenty of leapers had injured, or killed themselves overdoing a double. But Acker had been lucky. And his little wife could do a single somersault without half trying. Somehow the audience liked to watch Cora Acker do a single better than they liked to see her husband do his double. She was so small and fragile; and pretty, too—a prettiness made more appealing by a little frightened look in her eyes. Acker was stocky and black and full of importance. Audiences sensed that he was mean, too; and they sensed, somehow, that it was Cora's unobtrusive skill at the straw tick which brought him safely upright at the end of a leap. Any circus acrobat will tell you how important that is.

When Acker began to realise that Cora was stealing his show just by the way she stood ready at the tick, he devised a mechanical catch blanket. The blanket was hung loosely on a frame and made to drop down at right angles from two steel poles driven into the ground. Cora would stand, seemingly unoccupied, by the frame with her back to Acker. To the audience, he would appear headed for doom. Just at the right moment, still looking away, Cora would release the blanket. It would drop down in its frame to catch Acker. He'd bounce on it until he got his bearings, then leap lightly to his feet. It all happened so quickly that it left the audience breathless.

Of course, Cora knew when to release the blanket frame by the sound of Acker's springboard. But the audience didn't think of that. It looked mighty daring. And, considering that the blanket might not come down, it really was. In fact, it was a better act than many people realised, for nowadays we are all distracted and anaesthetised by so many different thrills. Only professionals, or the crowds in small backwoods communities, really appreciated the Ackers. Most of us are so accustomed to making machines do the seemingly impossible that we fail to recognise there are limits to what the human body can do, and in these days we cannot really appreciate the daring required in catapulting the body through tne air. Still, good leapers are hard to find. And, if Acker had been able to get along with managers, he and Cora could have made a good living. As it was, they drifted from show to show and began to get a reputation, among those who might have hired them, for being too intractable to bother with.

Cora Acker never complained. She had been a country girl, fascinated by Acker when he was playing a week's stand in the Middle West. She was seventeen then, and soon after their marriage he had bullied her into the routine of his act. Twice she was injured. But Acker was unrelenting, and he still made her do a single somersault.

She was in perpetual fear of his almost insane possessiveness. He wanted her to be pretty and appealing, yet, after every performance, he berated her for making a play for the benefit of the men in the audience. If she were wooden, he would become even angrier and accuse her of spoiling the turn. But by then, she was almost accustomed to his unreasonableness and scarcely noticed that it grew worse as they fell lower in their profession. By then, too, she was hardened to his accusations of infidelity. So, it was not altogether without motivation that Cora one day found herself in love, at last giving Acker reason for his once baseless accusations.

Like Cora herself, Fred Basil had come from the country. Like her, too, he had been attracted by the glamour of show business. Fred's act was to have himself buried alive, breathing through a tiny pipe, and then to allow the curious to look at him through a telescopic peephole.

Fred had been instantly attracted to Cora Acker. He told her of his life on the farm, under a tyrannical father, and of his dreams for escape. He told her of how he'd sneaked off to see a circus and had been soundly beaten for it; and of how he practised his act with an old packing-box in the barn. To the gawks who came to the carnival, he might be the "Death-defying Basil," but to Cora he was just a boy from the farm. He reminded her of the idyllic days before she married Acker.

Soon the whole company knew that the two were in love—knew it almost before they themselves realised it. Acker knew it, too, and he grew more and more cruel and demanding. There are no secrets among the members of a carnival troupe. They all knew how he treated Cora and they all hoped she'd run away with Basil.

Hating Acker, they began taunting him by expressing doubt that he had ever done a triple somersault. "If you did it once, you can do it again. And it ought to be a cinch with that catch blanket you've got rigged up. Why don't you put a flash in your act and try it?" That was Hylo, the clown, who, with fists clenched, had listened many a night outside of the Ackers' tent. Often he had heard Acker curse and abuse Cora even on days when she was already sick and miserable from a sinus infection.

But Hylo's suggestion of a triple somersault didn't fool Acker. "They all want me to kill myself and leave Cora to Basil," he thought. "Maybe I'll fool them . . . maybe it'll be the other way round."

It happened the day the show got into Montavilla, a little mountain town where the draw was sure to be good. Acker went to the manager's tent. "I'm going to do a triple," he said, "and you can advertise *that*."

The manager looked up. He liked Acker even less than did most people. "If I advertise it, you've got to do it."

"I'll do it, all right. And you can advertise another special, too. Cora will be buried alive with Basil. That ought to bring them in."

The manager's eyes widened.

"She'll do it," Acker said.

Fred Basil didn't like the idea and he told Cora so after lunch, behind the mess tent. "I won't have him humiliating you any longer," he said. "I'm going to have it out with Acker. I'm going to——"

"But that would be dangerous," Cora said. "Dangerous for me. Please, let's go through with it."

"You know what any dampness does to your sinus trouble." He took her slim shoulders in his big, competent, farmer's hands. "You mustn't do it. You know what Doc Seavers said . . ."

But he didn't tell her something else—that he believed that Acker meant to see them die, to see them smothered, somehow, there in the earth. It would be easy, in a crowd—a piece of wax over the tiny pipe, which scarcely provided enough air for himself, anyway. Perhaps Acker might even drop in a gaseous pellet. So Fred Basil asked Hylo to watch the air pipe while he and Cora were down below.

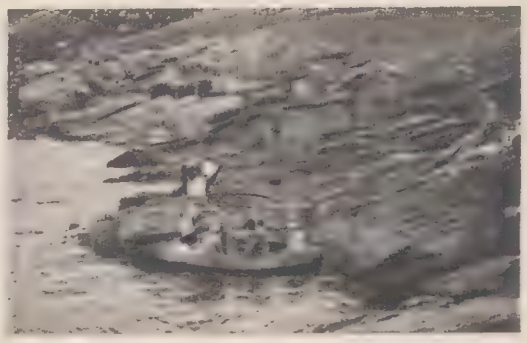
Finally, the time came for their act. Hylo watched the pipe, as he had promised to do and he watched Acker, too, standing at the edge of the crowd with his eyes curiously furtive. And Hylo knew that Acker knew he was watching Acker's every move. Hylo noted, too, the dark scowl of frustration come to Acker's face as the precious moments slipped by.

Acker smiled when he saw them filing in. The suckers didn't know that a man can do a triple into a catch blanket like he had, without risking much. Nowadays they wouldn't realise that the trick—the real trick, like Worland's—was to do it on a straw tick, flat on the ground.

They saw Cora, slender and pretty, walk to the queer frame and stand with her back towards Acker. They didn't know that she was still chilled from that hour in the damp box and that her head seemed filled to bursting point by the sinus inflammation. Their attention turned quickly to the smiling Acker. They saw him run mightily towards the springboard and leap high. They saw his body resolve itself into a spinning ball. They heard the sickening sound as he struck the hard ground, first on his forehead, then on his doubled-up knees.

Cora Acker stood by the steel frame, ready to release the catch blanket. She did not hear the women scream. She heard them no more than she had heard the vibrating springboard as Acker leaped into the air. That hour beneath two feet of damp earth had brought on the deafness which Doc Seavers had predicted.

The lighthouse at Lewis, the last sight before Rona



Taking some of the wild sheep off rocky Rona

Transferring some of the sheep to the ship, *Provider*

FROM HERE TO HERE TO SHEAR THEIR SHEEP

Being the story of a midnight journey to the Isle of Seals, one of the loneliest and remotest of all the isles of Great Britain

BY ALASDAIR ALPIN MACGREGOR

IT is believed that St. Kilda was the first of our British Isles to be evacuated in historical times. But this is not so. Far out in the north Atlantic, a distance of forty-four miles north-north-east of the Butt of Lewis and forty-five miles north-west of Cape Wrath, is a lone isle known as Rona (the Isle of Seals.)

Measured from north to south, it is roughly a mile and a half in length; whereas toward the south it attains a maximum breadth of a mile. It is composed of Lewisian gneiss, the oldest known rock in the world; and its area is somewhere in the region of 300 acres.

The island, on the whole, is flat, particularly that part of it known as Fianuis, which possesses a storm-beach and is also almost completely barren. Toward the south-east it rises steeply in the form of a ridge to an altitude of 355 feet. It is entirely cliff-bound, and therefore almost entirely shoreless.

Only at two spots, one on the east and the other on the south, is landing possible; and even at these points the greatest difficulty and peril are often experienced, except in very calm weather and in the absence of a north Atlantic swell.

Rona's cliffs are of considerable height, having regard to the island's limited area. These cliffs fall sheer to the ocean, and are the resort of countless sea-birds. In this respect, Rona resembles Sula Sgeir, that lone and precipitous gannetry lying roughly a dozen sea miles to the westward.

The cliffs of Rona are exposed to the full fury of the Atlantic tempest, and out of them the sea, through the ages, has scooped innumerable caves. The best known of these caves is the Tunnel Cave, to which a rounded arch of solid rock, some fifty feet in altitude, forms the entrance. The cave itself is more than a hundred feet in length. It pierces the gneiss where Rona narrows to an isthmus, through which one day the tides and tempests inevitably must cut their way, and thus divide Fianuis from the remainder of Rona.

The impression that this remote fragment of Britain makes upon one approaching it for the first time is at once startling and enduring; and the experience of setting foot on such territory defeats all powers of tongue and pen, since the nature of such an experience is basic—elemental—primordial.

Once you have put foot on Rona you are, in every sense of the term, out of the world! The abiding solitude of this isle, disturbed only by the breaking of seas, by the occasional bleating of sheep, by the haunting calls of sea-fowl and, not infrequently, by the roar of wind among the cliffs and caverns, never fails to convey one back in imagination to time primeval, when the face of the earth knew not the countenance of man.

Except for the northern and south-western extremities, Rona supports a flourishing vegetation. There is neither heather nor peat; and, of course, one finds nothing in the nature of a bush, far less a tree! But rough grass grows profusely and affords excellent pasturage for the two hundred sheep belonging to Alasdair MacFarquhar, a Lewis farmer, who visits his flock once a year, weather permitting.

In olden times the natives—for there was an ancient people dwelling on this remote fragment—burned dried divots and driftwood, when procurable. The island's lack of peat had caused them to cut much of the best pasturage for purposes of fuel; and this probably explains the barrenness of that part of Rona known as Fianuis.

If one thing more than another on Rona impresses the few adventurous souls who find their way to its lonely pastures, it is the solidarity of the primitive, dry-stone houses comprising its ruined and deserted village. Because of the state of collapse into which these buildings have fallen, it is not easy to ascertain whether originally there were four houses or five.

Solid slabs of rock, hewn simply by the naked hand of man, from the ageless cliffs on the south-west of the island, many of them weighing two and three hundredweights, lie upon one another in such a way as to have resisted the elements that, long before this, would have reduced to the ground buildings constructed of stone and lime and cement.

It is true, of course, that the fact that these houses were built half underground has protected them considerably from the violence of the Atlantic gales. The houses average six feet in height—three feet above the level of the ground, and three feet below. So as to avoid the prevailing south-west wind, all the doors were made to face the east.

For unnumbered generations the Isle of Seals was inhabited, as I already have indicated. Not until toward the middle of last century did conditions become so inimical as to drive out its last inhabitants.

The last family to inhabit Rona was that of a shepherd named Donald MacLeod, who was known among the people of Lewis as King of Rona. Donald and his dependants returned to the parent Island of Lewis in 1844, and, except for the annual sheep-shearing visits of Alasdair MacFarquhar and his party, which I already have mentioned, and for the solitary exile on the Island of two men, who perished there in 1885, Rona has remained unpeopled since.

Last summer I voyaged out of the world in company with Alasdair MacFarquhar, his shepherds and their dogs, and those other supernumeraries from Ness, who, when circumstances permit, are

(*please turn to page* 13)

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only too eager to accompany this annual expedition out into the north Atlantic and to lend a hand with the gathering, shearing, and transportation of Rona's semi-wild sheep.

A summer's nightfall of fog and small rain found me alone by the storm-damaged breakwater at Port of Ness, waiting for the arrival of the motor-driven fishing vessel *Provider*, owned by a Lewis crew and due at any moment from Stornoway, some thirty-six miles or more to the "suthard." Against the cliffs, everywhere around me, heavy seas were battling with an air of grim defiance; the swell, visibly increasing in determination every moment, gave little hope of anything but a rough passage that night—if, indeed, a passage were attempted at all!

I felt a little chilled and disconsolate at the prospect, as I wandered in solitude about the deserted harbour, doubtful whether the *Provider* would ever turn up that evening. About 10 p.m., however, a transient lane in the fog disclosed a craft of one kind or another, roughly half a mile distant, and apparently making for the port.

My pulse quickened as the vessel neared sufficiently to enable me, not to read her name in the falling light, but to identify her skipper as Calum Beag MacLeod, a neighbour at my own village of Sandwick, and a seaman of great acumen. There was no doubt now that this was the vessel for which I was waiting and that, in all probability she would make her forty-six mile trip out into the north Atlantic that night, prepared to find herself somewhere in the vicinity of Rona at daybreak.

A scene of loneliness and desolation suddenly was transformed into one of bustle and activity. The storm, the heavy ground-swell, the darkness falling ominously now, appeared of little consequence. As if from nowhere, men in groups of twos and threes began to descend by the cliff footpaths, carrying all manner of things—provisions, pots and pans and kettles, coal in a sack, chunks of firewood, a gun or two, picks and spades, hammers, nails, and staples, wooden posts of varying dimensions, fencing wire, wire netting, together with all the other paraphernalia requisite to penning and shearing in the primitive setting for which we were bound.

Offshore, the *Provider* dropped anchor; the swell and an onshore gale made her coming alongside the pier an undertaking too hazardous. In three or four relays with the small boat, men and dogs, provisions and implements, were transferred aboard her. As we weighed anchor, a crowd of some fifty Ness people assembled to see our departure, despite the falling of fog and chill rain.

Standing in sharp silhouette on the skyline above the cliffs, they waved us adieu after the fashion that has been observed in northern Lewis all down the centuries during which men, and possibly dogs, have sailed out once a year from Port of Ness to the cliffs and the lonely pastures of Rona.

Night had fallen now. Angrier grew the seas. A powerful head wind whistled through the riggings and through the gear, tightly roped down on deck. I felt as though we were voyaging away into the Outer Darkness—to the mysterious Unknown—out into an immeasurable welter of storm and troubled water, out to a horizon dim and foreboding, and eternally land-less voyaging, as it were, out of the world altogether.

When we cleared the Butt of Lewis, and had its lighthouse flashing on our stern, we immediately steered a nor'-nor'-easterly course, along which we pitched and rolled, hour after hour. On deck, the rains began to beat more persistently, with the result that before long most of us had crept away to sleep either in a bunk, or in a corner somewhere or other in the warm cabin.

About 4 a.m. one of the crew woke me with the customary mug of the strongest tea ever brewed by a sailorman aboard ship! The vessel was still rolling heavily; and every now and then one heard the lolloping and slithering of loose objects gravitating temporarily to a new place of rest.

Shortly afterwards, I came on deck, still half asleep, to find that the night rains had ceased, and the winds abated somewhat. Seated on deck by the hatchway were two of the older members of the crew, who had been on watch throughout the night.

"Rona ahead!" said one of them to me. Brushing the sleep from my eyes, I peered through the first glimmer of dawn to envisage a long, dark, seal-like mass stretching across our bows. We had sighted the eastern end of the island of our quest. It still lay some miles distant, however; and it was not until half an hour or so later that the *Provider* anchored a couple of hundred yards off the lee shore.

Here, amid the noise of barking seals and flighting sea-fowl, we awaited sufficient daylight to enable us to transfer ourselves, our dogs and our equipment by small boat to the perilous landing-ledge among the sheering cliffs. At no time is embarkation or disembarkation at Rona wanting in risk. A swell or a breaking wave of any magnitude whatsoever renders either well-nigh impossible.

Meanwhile the island cliffs seemed to become alive with hurrying, scurrying, crying sea-birds. Winging about the rocks at the south-east end were groups of inquisitive puffins—sea-parrots, as the sailors call them. Now and again, one of them would wing out over our craft, as if curious to ascertain the object of our visit to their island sanctuary.

A year had passed since they had seen the form of man.

Everywhere around us now, the creeks were hotching with seals—truly an ocular demonstration of the appropriateness of this setting, since Rona, when viewed from the sea at a distance, looks for all the world like a great bull-seal, and, as I have already indicated, is said to have derived its name from *ròn*, which is the Gaelic for a seal.

No sooner did the sheep-dogs sight land than they became restive to be put ashore. Most of them had visited this lone isle on previous summers and were quite familiar, therefore, with the procedure to be adopted. With the first contingent of shepherds and dogs, I landed on Rona, hanging on tenaciously to my camera and its appurtenances.

Since there was still too little daylight for photography, I spent the next hour or so in assisting the expedition with the unloading of various materials on the perilous rocks, and in carrying them a little inland to the dry-stone sheep-fank. By this time, one or two of the Ness shepherds had set off for the other side of the island to locate MacFarquhar's sheep, and to drive them down toward the fank.

The gathering of this semi-wild flock was no simple affair. At times a few of the sheep would break away from the main body and dash off, at terrific speed, to some of their more inaccessible haunts among the sea-cliffs.

While this gathering was in process, others of the party were engaged either in preparing breakfast on the coal fire kindled in the shelter of the fank, or in erecting the temporary funnel of fencing, in order to make the sheep converge at the entrance to the fank. It was like a scene from some primeval land when, a little later, men and dogs and sheep were seen to move in silhouette down the sloping skyline toward our improvised fences.

Anxious to use my camera while the lighting seemed at its best, I now proceeded to the deserted village, and to the overgrown places where a people that is gone tilled and sowed and garnered a meagre area, after the ancient fashion of the "lazy-bed." There came upon me, as I wandered along the thrift-covered walls of Rona's desolate habitations, a feeling of the utter purposelessness and futility of man's presence on the face of the earth.

It was obvious that, as in previous years, there had been a good deal of nesting among the ruins. Young, fluffy fulmars squatted in deep burrows everywhere around me. Often they betrayed their whereabouts quite unnecessarily by noisily spitting out their oil at me, as I passed along in my endeavour to find suitable spots from which to photograph the eerie ruins.

Year after year—indeed, generation after generation—the fulmar nests in a recess in the walls of the ruined manse on Rona. As the time of our arrival was July, I knew that, in a probability, a visit to the manse would provide me with an excellent photograph of a baby fulmar.

Another baby fulmar, ensconsed amid the ruins of the Chapel of St. Ronan, near at hand, also presented itself to the camera, but not before it had exhausted its internal oil supply and had landed one huge ejaculation on my camera front, within a fraction of an inch of the rim of the lens.

I now lingered through the old burying-ground, among the shapeless mounds and sunken stones marking the tombs of an ancient, vanished race; as one momentarily stilled, I gazed at the inscription on the tilted stone erected over the bodies of the two exiles from Ness, who in 1885 perished on Rona in solitude indescribable.

Close at hand stood the shell of the village, a place apart, a place literally out of the world—so much so, in fact, that, nearly a century earlier than the evacuation of St. Kilda, men had to abandon it to its ghosts.

By the time that I returned to the scene of operations, the gathering, the driving, the shedding, and the shearing were almost completed. It seemed strange to contemplate that the intense activity of the last few hours was all that Rona and its wild inhabitants—birds, and seals and sheep—would see of the queer ways of mankind until a year later—unless, of course, a trawler happened to anchor offshore, and some of her crew landed to replenish the larder with one of MacFarquhar's lambs, as doubtless they do at times!

In the later afternoon, the team-work that had characterised our disembarkation in the early hours of the morning was now renewed with a view to embarking again, while conditions appeared most favourable. The swell had subsided considerably and the wind had fallen. But a blink of sunshine made some of us loth to depart a moment sooner than was necessary.

The task of transferring some fifty of the sheep by small boat to the *Provider* at her anchorage, demanded the co-operation of everyone ashore, since each animal had to be carried on shoulders to the very edge of the landing-ledge, and then handed down to the seamen manning the small boat.

Immediately the sheep were aboard, the temporary fences were thrown down, dismantled, and rolled up in somewhat clumsy fashion. In due course they found their way to the deck of the *Provider*, along with the various culinary utensils, and such of the coal as had not been used. The last man ashore scattered the smouldering embers of the open fire by the sheep-fank, and came away with such fleeces as had been left behind by those of us who already had carried down to the landing-ledge as much as we could. The shorn sheep had returned by this time to their haunts on the other side of the island, well out of sight.

As we weighed anchor, countless sea-birds now started to resume their tenancy of the cliffs from which our arrival had disturbed them so warily that morning. A number of seals now popped up their heads on every side of us, anxious to see our departure for the peopled world.

Apart from a score of sea-fowl shot by one or two of our company with the guns they had taken ashore, this day on Rona saw only one other casualty. As a boatload of sheep was being ferried over to the *Provider*, one animal leapt overboard, and swam farther out to sea. Immediate attempts to retrieve it failed; and it was therefore drowned.

For some time we lost sight of it entirely, through the restless nature of the water. On quitting our anchorage, we cruised about for a little, until one of our number located its floating carcase upon the tide. The small boat, being towed astern meanwhile, and occupied by two of our crew, was given considerably more rope. A minute or two later, a dead, limp, brine-saturated thing lay on the planks at the starboard bow. The drowning of this sheep was accepted in a very casual manner.

It was regarded as one of the very minor episodes in an expedition of this nature. The crudeness, the primitiveness of the whole setting became even more apparent when a young fellow aboard, having all the technique of butchery at his finger-tips, rolled up his sleeves, and set to on the carcase. In the matter of a few minutes, he had it skinned and completely dismembered, much to the admiration of the ship's passengers, who in the meanwhile had stood round to witness what, to me at any rate, was a sickening sight and one savouring of a primitive barbarism.

But seamen harbour no such squeamish feelings; and so, in less than an hour they were visiting the cabin in relays, to partake of the flesh of the drowned sheep.

We were now steering a course for the Butt; and at nightfall, six hours or so later, I disembarked at Port of Ness, leaving the shepherds and their dogs to proceed with their sheep to Stornoway.

Thus ended a unique and memorable experience.

Except for the annual excursion from Ness of Alasdair MacFarquhar and his shepherds and fowlers, Rona remains little but a grim reminder of a race that faced its indescribable solitude and desolation. Untended sheep roam over its hillsides: grey seals sing in its caverns: sea-birds innumerable inhabit, not merely every ledge of its cliffs, but also every nook of the old, primitive village, and of St. Ronan's Chapel. The quern-stones, that crushed grain for the ancient inhabitants, lie buried deep in the grassy turf.

For weeks on end, and sometimes even months, brooding fogs envelope this, the loneliest of the British Isles; and for more than half the year the storms of the Atlantic, unfettered, reverberate through the ruined, ghost-haunted homesteads of a vanished people.

ECHO OF MAGGIE TOM

The fleeting shadows of beauty that brought back all the loveliness of youth to her face, haunted his memory, even in the midst of this jungle duel for another girl who was going the same way

BY KENNETH PERKINS

ILLUSTRATED BY T. GRAINGER JEFFREY

THE scent of musk and sandalwood trees kept bringing the picture of a girl to Strathy's mind. He had forgotten her ever since he was on the Singapore Bund. Now he was in India riding up the Ghats with a sub-collector who talked of Indian stamp duties, famine policy and pig-sticking clubs. But Strathy kept thinking of that girl.

He had the illusion, because of the fragrant mists, that she was riding at his side. He tried to get her out of his mind. But there she was—the dream of her—her eyes painted with kohl, her hands and feet tinted with henna, her slim shoulders hot to the touch, although they were the colour of old ivory.

He had a much vaguer memory of the place where he had met her. It was some sort of a club, or café, kept by a half-caste Chinese, frequented by whites, with a special clientele of petty officers and stewards of the Merchant Service. It was not hard to get an introduction to that nervous, red-haired, bhang-smoking beauty, for all you had to do was to ask for Maggie Tom.

The old sub-collector jogging at his side awoke him. "If you're stopping at Moung's plantation, our ways fork right here. I always stop at the dak bungalow in my itinerary. Moung's not very hospitable."

Actually it was the mention of Moung's name which had first reminded Ned Strathy of Maggie Tom.

"I shall cut my visit short," Strathy said. "Just a few questions about indigo for the departmental report. Fact is, I've heard of him before. A girl in a Singapore café told me about him."

"Moung and a café girl! My winkie!"

"She said he was the one who started her on the skids. Young English girl. Cornered her, you know. She had to take either him or the beach."

The sub-collector looked actually alarmed. He had known Strathy for only an hour, their routes converging on the Ghats. Strathy was a long-boned, jungly chap with a reckless face and a huge dog which had the same green glint in his eye as his master. Dog and man were alike in a deceptive, shambling way which hid a rampant love for the jungle.

"I say! You aren't going to mention that point when you meet Moung? I mean, that you'd heard something of his past!"

"Why should I?" Strathy said, honestly. "I don't poke around in other men's private lives."

"Good! You scared me for a moment. Perhaps because of that dog. I noticed you went a mile out of your way to give him a drink. I was afraid you might go out of your way in this matter of the café girl and her wrongs."

"The dog's different. Just a pariah dog I picked up down there on the plains. He was being beaten to death for stealing rice. What's that got to do with the café girl?"

"Nothing at all. One helps a dog that's being beaten. Even a pariah dog."

"But one doesn't help a pariah woman. Is that what you're trying to say?" They dismounted and had whiskey-pegs. "Well, you're right. One doesn't. It was no affair of mine. I didn't even listen to her. It was the same old sob story that couldn't bilk a drunken sailor. 'A governess in a respectable Englishman's family'—that sort of yarn. The children sent home to England with their mother. Moung gives the girl a job as his secretary, of all things! He has an old aunt on deck as a sort of chaperone but she goes to Ooty 'for her health.' The girl's left alone with Moung in the jungle. Why the dashed hell didn't she run away? Poppycock, anyway, the whole story. But"—he seemed to talk to himself—"I can't seem to forget her mouth. I dare say she was a beauty once. It came back to her face when she smoked more bhang—that beauty of hers. Flashes of the loveliest thing you might see in a girls' school back home in England. Shall I go on?"

"I'd say, forget her." They tightened their horses' girths and mounted.

The sub-collector watched him picking out a ride through the scrub jungle. The dog slouched along, the hair on his shoulders bristling with vibrant joy at every scent and sound. Both of them had the perpetual air of questing for something.

"I say, Strathy!" he called out, suddenly, "hold on a minute! I want to say just one more thing. I don't know much about this fellow Moung. Haven't seen him for two years. They say white men don't work for him any more. He may be pukka-and may not. If this Maggie Tom story is true, he got away with it without losing face. But since he lives up here where one never hears what's going on at his plantation, I wouldn't offend him. I wouldn't bring up the name of this Maggie Tom. He might not like it."

"I'm not an ass," Strathy said. And again they parted.

When Strathy reached Moung's plantation he found the third crop of the year in flower. White-washed houses stood out harshly against the long drills of indigo-fermentation vats, the go-down, the servants' lines, the office bungalow banked with flowers. In front of this latter a writer-babu in alpaca coat and a red pencil behind his ear accepted Strathy's card and said that Moung Sahib would be sent for. He ushered the visitor into a glaring room where teak desks, chairs, filing cabinets were set in cups of petrol to ward against the ants. A punkah flapped, waving the wisps of auburn hair over the fragile forehead of a very young white girl.

"I am Mr. Moung's secretary."

She asked Strathy to sit down and then stared at him with obvious excitement. She saw him remove his pith helmet and give a nervous stroke to his hair, wet from the heat. His eyes were wildly bright. A queer, fierce-looking fellow! But he had something which was rarely seen on this domain—that is to say, youth.

"The Inspector General of Agriculture wrote us about you, Mr. Strathy," she said, when the writer gave her the card and letter of introduction. "And Mr. Moung said you were to be shown around the plantation as soon as you came."

"Did you say you were his secretary?" Strathy gulped.

"Yes, since the first of the year. I'm in charge of the office. Mr. Moung spends most of his time at the vats, you know. They're drawing off the indigo white to-day——" She checked herself because of his intense glare. He looked actually murderous.

Strathy did not know exactly what had happened until he was sitting in a grasshopper chair with tea and muffins on one of the long bamboo arms.

He asked her how long she had known Moung.

"Several months. When my father lost his tea plantation Mr. Moung was very good to me. He gave me a position here."

"Where's your father now?"

"My father's not living now."

He watched her hand as it removed the tea cosy. Her fingers were as fragile and translucent as the china of the tea cups.

"And after that, you didn't go home to England?" he asked.

"I have no home in England. This is my home. I love India. I was to teach the superintendent's children French and music, but there was a change of plans. Their mother took them to England so I was given this job. It's glorious fun——" She stopped as if gasping at the fragrant air. The heat, swirled in lazy puffs by the punkah, seemed in some magic way to come from this man sitting near her, watching her.

"Then you're the only girl here now, the only woman?"

"Why do you ask that?"

"It's a pretty big jungle."

"No. I'm not the only one. Of course not." A flush went up her white throat, to her cheeks and into her eyes. "It's funny how you all want to know the same thing." She laughed it off. "There's Mr. Moung's aunt, if you're a stickler for chaperones."

"There was a sort of chaperone when Maggie Tom worked here."

The girl set her tea cup down with a bump. "I say, what are you talking about?"

"You remind me of Maggie Tom. Your mouth especially. She had a lovely mouth, like a child's."

She stood up. Then she called to the writer-babu. "Rasood, this is Mr. Strathy. He's indigo research chemist to the Government. Whatever he wants to see, you will show him."

Strathy went out with the writer, glanced over the interminable drills from the verandah, asked a list of routine questions, then announced that he wanted to see Mr. Moung's secretary alone.

When he was facing her, he started in as if there had been no interruption. "When is Mr. Moung's aunt leaving for Ooty?"

She was taken completely off her guard. "I didn't realise you knew so much about our household affairs."

"Gup travels fast in India."

"She talks once in a while of a trip to Ooty, but it wasn't supposed to be known all over the Presidency. Mr. Moung was worried about people talking—about me. I see he was right."

"When is his aunt leaving?"

"Has that something to do with your departmental report?"

"It has to do with the case of Maggie Tom."

"Oh, yes, the girl with the child's mouth."

"It was a different mouth when I saw her. Painted thick red. I meant that it was like yours before she fell in love with Moung."

She jumped up and faced him, her eyes sparkling fiercely.

"You have a pretty cool cheek, I'd say, coming here talking to me like this. Who are you, anyway?"

"You have my card and my credentials."

"All right. You've attended to that business. Now what more do you want? If it's to tell me about someone who used to work here, you needn't trouble. I just now went up to ask his aunt who this Maggie Tom is. She said she'd never heard of

Lead whined like a winged insect that strikes a man's ear. Strathy fell. A voice called seriously, "Stand away from him, Miss Kersey. I want a closer shot"

her. There was a Margaret Thomas who was a governess and then Mr. Moung's secretary. But when his aunt came back from Ooty, the woman had been discharged."

"And she turned up later in a waterfront dive at Singapore," Strathy said. "His aunt didn't tell you that, did she? She didn't know. Nobody seems to know. This jackal, Moung, knows how to cover his tracks."

He stopped abruptly when he heard the metallic clip of shod hoofs out in the compound.

Moung appeared as a broad figure formed in vertical lines, behind the tatti curtains. Blotting out the strips of light, he loomed grotesquely large. He came in—a fattish man in damp whites, his thin hair faded by the tropics to the pale ochre of his face.

His eyes flicked from Strathy to the girl. He saw the girl's young chest panting.

Strathy introduced himself. "Perhaps to-morrow I could go over the grounds more thoroughly," he said.

"Why to-morrow? Why not to-day before tiffin?"

"Because I must be deliberate in what I have to do," Strathy said. "The department is trying to find just which districts might be advised to change from indigo to sugar or coffee. The industry is seriously threatened by coal tar products. The artificial stuff has long since wiped out safflower and lac dyes here in India——"

Moung interrupted. "Then I suppose you'll be putting up at Parak Falls. There's a very good dak bungalow there and I can recommend the food."

The girl suppressed a gasp. Moung seemed to have overlooked an Englishman's prerogative, travelling in a wild part of the Hills. To refuse him a night's lodging was unheard of.

"My horse is lamed," Strathy said. "I'm afraid I can't go on."

Moung gave a fat smile. He stepped to the door and called out to the stud groom to take Mr. Strathy's horse to the stables and unsaddle it.

"I have twenty horses you can choose from. If you don't like the native Bengali breed I have two English jumpers. I shall be glad to mount you."

"I don't know the rides in the dark. And I hear there's quicksand on that route." Strathy sat down and filled his pipe.

"I can supply a *shikari* for you."

"Thanks. Tell him to be ready to-morrow evening."

There was danger on Moung's face. He caught the girl gaping at him and his eyes narrowed till the pouches made them slits. "Is there some other reason," he asked, "why you are so anxious to stay the night?"

As both men looked at her, the girl's face drained white as the *chunam* of the office walls.

Strathy said through pipe smoke: "I rather looked forward to an evening with some of my own race. You have no idea how hungry I am for a good talk."

"What about?"

Strathy sucked at his pipe as if thinking. "Well, for one thing, we could talk about Maggie Tom."

The girl watched the effect of this. She saw Moung stiffen, his head lowered on bulging neck muscles. At the mention of that name, she saw his eyes turn big and yellow. He was staggered; his face turgid and splotched.

She whirled on Strathy. "Can't you see you're not wanted here? Why don't you go before you start a lot of bobbery you can't finish?"

Moung straightened himself slowly. He seemed rather too calm all of a sudden. "I'll have a horse saddled and ready for you, Mr. Strathy." He called out to a groom to saddle a mount and tend to the food and water kit. When he turned back into the room he saw Strathy standing there with his hand on his belt, his face like stone.

"Have you something more to say?" Moung was able to grin now.

"Not to you." Strathy turned to the girl. "Perhaps you are blind. If you aren't, I shall be glad to take you down to Meysore."

The girl slipped between the two men, even though Moung had made no sound, no movement. She broke the tense silence with a laugh—a soft, mysterious sound that was scorn and melody and hysterics all in one. "You come here and tell me that it looks off colour to live under the same roof with Mr. Moung. You tell me that, even though he's always treated me like his own daughter. And then you suggest I go for a two-days' ride through the jungle alone with you, a perfect stranger. Quite a proposition, I'd say."

The stiffness went out of Strathy's shoulders. "Then that seems to settle the thing," he said, quietly.

Moung beamed. "Your mount is ready, Mr. Strathy."

"I shall take my own mount, thanks."

"What! Not lame after all? Then you'll have a *shikari* to take you up to the Falls?"

"I shall manage alone, thanks."

"Or anything for your kit? English water? Tinned beef?"

"Nothing." With more of a shrug than a bow, he put on his helmet, adjusted the puggaree and went out.

Of course he came back.

Late that night the girl, retiring to her room, saw him sitting on the verandah outside her window. The hot, pungent darkness hid him as he sat there, except when the wind parted the giant blossoms and moonlight filtered on his vivid face. He was sprawled on a chair, his dog at his feet.

She asked coolly: "What are you doing here?"

He got up. But the dog made no movement; he lay there with legs stretched wide, as dogs will do in the heat, oblivious of the night beetles rattling in the air. A dog like that, so shapeless and wilted, hardly seemed asleep—unless it was the sleep the natives call *samadai*, when all animation is suspended.

"I came back for you."

"If I told Mr. Moung, he'd have someone pistol you."

"I have a pistol of my own."

"Look here! What did you do to the punkah-boy and the night watchman?"

"Nothing. No bribes or fisticuffs were necessary. I got here without heroics. Absurdly simple. Your servants just left—very discreetly. When they saw a white man coming to your verandah, they must have thought it was Moung himself. Moung has them trained to see just what he wants them to see. Isn't that plain enough! When he decides to walk into your room one of these nights, who's going to stop him? Who stopped me?"

Her cigarette glowed hot in the dark. His pipe gave an answering signal of excitement.

"If that doesn't bring you to your senses, perhaps this will: Moung had one of his own horses saddled for me, remember? When I refused it, my saddle and kit were changed to my own mount. Moung went down to the stables when this was done. He had a chance to get at my canteen."

"What about it?"

"He wouldn't stop at poisoning a man who comes between him and the woman he wants."

"You're lying!"

"Look at that dog."

Her eyes rolled downward, enormous and white-rimmed at the shapeless thing on the verandah's edge.

"He was thirsty. I poured some water from my

(*please turn to page* 17)

From a 'Paunchy' man to a Fine Figure...
IN 10 MINUTES!

Mr. G. Brooks writes:

"I REDUCED MY WAIST 8 INCHES"

ACTUAL REPRODUCTIONS SHOWING THE IMMEDIATE IMPROVEMENT IN APPEARANCE

1 "I was just a fat man with a protruding stomach—ill at ease and clumsy—no vitality to do anything."

2 "Then I put on a Frank Forman Belt—a transformation took place—pounds seemed to have fallen away."

3 "My friends were astonished. I looked better—my clothes fitted me—and I felt twenty years younger."

I am so sure that the wonderful FRANK FORMAN Belt will Reduce your waistline at least 3 inches that I want you to

TEST IT FOR 10 DAYS AT MY EXPENSE!

Yes, Sir; I, too, promised myself that I would exercise, but it was too much like work—and it's hard to diet when you *like* to eat. The Frank Forman Belt was just the answer—no diets, no drugs—I feel like a new man and I lost 8 inches of fat in less than 6 months.

IMPROVES YOUR APPEARANCE

The Frank Forman Reducing Belt will make you many inches slimmer at once, and in 10 short days your waistline will actually be 3 inches smaller—three inches of fat gone—or it won't cost you a penny.

I GUARANTEE TO REDUCE YOUR WAIST 3 inches in 10 days OR IT WON'T COST YOU A PENNY!

It supports the sagging muscles of the abdomen and quickly gives a youthful, erect, athletic carriage. Do not be embarrassed any longer with that "corporation." Resolve to get rid of it quickly, safely, and without risk.

DON'T WAIT! FAT IS DANGEROUS

You will be entirely unaware that it is working constantly while you walk, work, or sit; its massage-like action gently but persistently eliminates fat with every move you make. It is the logical way to reduce.

Many enthusiastic wearers write that it reduces fat, supports the abdominal walls, and keeps the digestive organs in place—that they are no longer fatigued.

IT'S MASSAGE THAT DOES IT!

JUST SEND THIS COUPON

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Please send me full details of the Frank Forman Reducing Belt and your 10 days FREE TRIAL offer.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

(Use Coupon or send name and address on penny postcard.)

YOU MUST USE THIS 2-PURPOSE SOAP

Your finest safeguard against WINTER SKIN

Being a MEDICINAL *and* TOILET Soap, Cuticura serves a twofold purpose. It keeps your skin gloriously clear and rosy in spite of frequent exposure to wind and rain, smoke and fog; while its silky, emollient lather refines and beautifies coarse, sallow skin, making it smooth and supple as velvet. Start using this 2-purpose beauty soap to-day—it will endow you with a new peach-bloom loveliness, radiant with health.

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Sold by all Chemists and Stores.

Cuticura PREPARATIONS

CATARRH! IT'S USELESS TO ONLY FREE YOUR NOSE

I guarantee to clear it from your system in less than a month!

OR I WILL RETURN YOUR MONEY *IN FULL!*

THOUSANDS are walking about with deadly catarrh and don't know it, treating "symptoms" and imagine they are treating the "complaint." I will tell you where they are wrong with my new sample test. You can use the best spray ever made and worthless inhalants and medicaments but still be miles from treating the source of this dangerous disease.

Catarrh, with the complications that follow, is very serious, the deadly virulent mucus that drops from the throat to bronchial tubes, stomach and bowels is re-infecting the whole system.

I have discovered a simple but wonderful herb which forms part of my proven balanced five-fold treatment for all forms of dangerous catarrh.

Fill in coupon below and I will show you a simple, inexpensive method of tackling this problem once and for all. My plan is based on a "no relief, no pay" principle, so that you have everything to gain and nothing to lose.

YOU HAVE CATARRH IF—

Nose is blocked.
YOU HAVE HEAD NOISES
YOUR HEARING IS FAILING
Mucus drops in your throat
You have loose cough.
Breathing difficult.
You catch cold easily.
Your breath is foul.
Your throat is sore.
YOU ARE SUBJECT TO HAY FEVER.
You get headache.
Your memory is failing.
You tire quickly.
Your tongue is coated
You have pains after eating.
You are constipated.
You mouth-breathe.
—BEWARE!

WHAT I DID FOR OTHERS—I CAN DO FOR YOU

"I have suffered a long time through catarrh and indigestion, etc., but now they have all vanished. Thanks for your treatment, and the Special Instructions, they have worked wonderful."
W. A., 14/7/37

"You have done more for me in 3 weeks than my panel doctor did in 6 months. I can eat better, breathing better, less stomach trouble. In fact, it's some time since I felt like this."
H. H., 28/6/37

Originals may be inspected at my Consulting rooms.

SEND FOR FREE TEST SAMPLE

To ANGUS SINCLAIR (Dept P.S.I), 63/64, Chancery Lane, London, W.C.2.

Please send me free sample test with full directions and Treatise Booklet. I enclose 1½d. stamp to cover postage. (Optional).

NAME ..... Pin 1½d.

ADDRESS..... Stamp

KIDNEY WEAKNESS

leads to

BLADDER TROUBLES, BACKACHE, DISTURBED SLEEP, PAINFUL LIMBS

This is the time when chills, colds and lack of vitality affect the kidneys. When your kidneys are not filtering off properly the impurities of the system, the symptoms are **Backache, Disturbed Sleep, Swollen Joints and Acute Nerve Pains.** Never neglect these symptoms for they are the danger signals of coming ill-health.

Adrax gives quick relief—rebuilds health

The Adrax Treatment is the new scientific discovery for the elimination of kidney disorders. Prolonged research has shown that one medicine only could not give complete relief. A new technique was developed by which different medicines are taken at different times in accordance with an approved schedule. Hence the necessity for two entirely different tablets—one white and one brown. These tablets contain widely different medicaments of proved efficacy, each serving a separate purpose in promoting the return to health of the kidneys.

So certain is Adrax in its purifying action on the kidneys that there is a money back guarantee if it fails to restore normal urination, leading to perfect health in a few weeks.

"ADRAX" ended backache and dizziness

"I was looking forward to some years of comfort with means to enable me to enjoy life to its full. A few months ago I found that I was getting gradually distressed with pains in my back and dizziness. My work was suffering as a result, and worry was creeping in. At last I could bear it no longer, and by chance, picking up a daily paper I noticed an Adrax advertisement. I bought a 3/- box, carried out the directions to a tee, and I am glad to say that to-day I am once more "full of the joys of life" as I was 19 years ago."
M. B., London, S.E.18.

"ADRAX" relieved bladder trouble

"I have derived wonderful relief from bladder troubles thanks to Adrax. Please send me by return another box of Adrax, for which I enclose postal order."
A. N., Swanage.

ADRAX BRAND TREATMENT for the KIDNEYS and BLADDER

(No proprietary rights are claimed in manufacture)

Adrax Brand Tablets are obtainable at all chemists 3/- per box or direct from W. B. Cartwright, Ltd., Laboratories, Rawdon, Leeds.

canteen into a pan. Whatever the poison was, it was merciful," Strathy said. "The old hound just went to sleep."

She asked piteously, "But what can I do about it?"

"Think it over. That's why I brought the dog here, to make you think. If you need further proof that Moung's a killer, I've still got the canteen, right here."

She burst out frantically: "What do you want?"

"If you haven't sense enough to leave this house I'm going to force you."

A beam of moonlight shattered against her open mouth. He did not know whether she were going to scream, or not. But he took no chance. He sprang for her.

She was in his arms, a thin, helpless wisp of life, her hands dead cold, her body burning. She shook her head wildly.

"I won't scream!" she gasped into the big palm held in front of her mouth. His arms were like the trunk of an elephant, capable of infinite crushing pressure, but miraculously gentle.

"If you cry, I shall have to tie a puggaree around your mouth."

"No! I said no!" she gasped. "What are you going to do with me?"

"I'm taking you through the jungle to Meysore by rail to Madras."

She took another gulp, filling her lungs with the musk-hot air. His arms tightened. The lenient pressure of his flesh, the harsh onslaught of the perfumes merged into one force, quelling her. She moaned helplessly.

As a warning, he tore the puggaree from his helmet. But he did not use it. He knew by something revealed in that contact with her body, more than by her promise, that she would not scream. There was no tremor of resistance in that frail, soft thing he held in his arms. Perhaps at last she had awakened. She might have been thinking not of this abduction, but of that poisoned dog, the servants disappearing, Moung's eyes turning yellow at the mention of a name; of the aunt, of Ooty, of the children she had come to teach who were suddenly packed off to England; of many a covert look and wheedling word from Moung which had no meaning till now.

But all this was vague—an ugly cloud which still had no more shape than the mists from the *kuddahs*. The thing that was happening to her now was not vague but stark. This stranger was carrying her bodily into the jungle!

She found herself in the saddle in front of him. When they passed the compound gate she had her last chance to scream. She could do it now when she was not facing him or staring terrified into his eyes. But she saw it was not necessary.

At any rate, whatever her state of mind, the girl did not scream.

Thinking he was out of danger, Strathy stopped in a tope of banyans and ferns which hummed with the flight of insects and the rush of water. He dismounted silently, lifted her to the ground and knelt by the stream to get her a drink.

She watched him as he came to her, the moon outlining his gaunt figure. She stared, holding the cup. Then, for the first time on that flight, she spoke:

"Moung knows what's happened. He's stalking you."

"Nonsense. It's over an hour. He could have caught us easily what with two of us on a horse."

"You aren't afraid, even when I'm warning you!"

"Why should I believe you?"

The moonlight glowed in her eyes. "I see now why Maggie Tom sent you."

"She didn't send me. She never even knew my name. I only met her once when I was a bit blued."

"Yes, never mind that. She sent you, anyway. She wanted to get back at Moung. She wanted someone to come and fight him at his own game. Maybe she guessed there'd be another girl going through the same mill. She knew you were the kind who'd take her by force. She saw that glint in your eye—the same glint that frightened me!"

"A jolly good glint I must have had when *she* saw me!"

"She knew," the girl persisted, "that you'd be the sort who'd come back even though Moung tried to poison you. You came back to risk your life. You did it even though you didn't know me any more than you knew Maggie Tom!"

"One sight of you was reason enough."

"Oh! You fell in love with me, I suppose you're trying to say."

He stepped to his horse to get his canteen and refill it with pure water. But when his hand was on the strap a gun barked from the darkness of the ferns.

The whole arbour blazed as if with a sudden light thrown upon a hideous lurking truth. Lead whined like a winged insect that strikes a man's ear. Strathy fell.

A voice called seriously, "Stand away from him, Miss Kersey, my girl. I want a closer shot."

Her first impulse seemed to be to throw herself down by Strathy's side. But she stood her ground and said calmly, "You've got him, Mr. Moung. Don't waste good bullets.

"If you kill him you might have to explain it, Mr. Moung," the girl went on steadily. "It would look like murder."

"Murder! When you were kidnapped! You won't deny that, I hope?"

"Of course I won't. He took me by force. He had a gag ready for me. Isn't that enough of a case for any judge?"

It came to Strathy slowly that Moung had made a bad shot, aiming for his back, but a little too high. The lead might have struck his shoulder blade, sending him reeling with the impact.

"But I can't understand," Moung was saying, "why you're trying to save his life."

"I'm trying to save your face," she said. "I love you. You've known it right along. But you're cutting a pretty dicky figure shooting a man like a pie-dog."

Strathy struggled to his feet, stood swaying—a gaunt, spineless thing that waved queerly in the moonlight.

"Put up your hands," Moung said quietly. Then, "Can you walk? I shan't give you a horse. Don't expect that."

"I can walk."

"Take his horse, Rea. We'll go back home."

The moon shone dead white on the girl's face. "Aren't you going to bind his wound? How can he walk? It'll take all night."

"Get on that horse," he repeated. It was plain enough that he had some other plan beside making his prisoner walk all the way to the plantation.

Strathy was certain of this when he staggered on ahead of the two riders and his captor ordered him into a dark jheel. "How do you expect me to see where I'm going?"

"The ride leads straight. You're crossing a river bed in a minute. There'll be lots of light." He gave more orders. The prisoner was marched into a by-path off the main ride, down a rocky khor, then on ankle-deep moss. Moung seemed to know the place by heart, or else, like a dog, by the sense of smell alone. Just enough moonlight slanted through the ferns to reveal the solid blackness of the trees on either side. Strathy staggered on.

But as he went he felt a strange trembling of the ground beneath his feet. He thought at first it was a dizzy spell, a weakness in his knees. He steadied himself. Across a space of caked mud there was a rise heavily banked with black flowers and jungle vines. If he could reach that mass of darkness without a shot in his back, he could get under cover, hide, perhaps escape. Moung and the girl, he noticed, had reined in their mounts on the bank of the river-bed. He risked the break.

He sprinted, staggered headlong, fell up to his elbows in ooze.

He had the impression for the next few moments that the jungle vines were creeping out towards him slowly, noiselessly like snakes to a nest. When he struggled in the quaking ground the vines snuggled up, twined about his arms. They had been there all the time, partly submerged in the viscous mud, but with his own struggles they awakened, so to speak, to a malignant, crawling life.

When the girl spoke, her voice came across the river-bed as if the moonlit expanse of mud about Strathy's shoulders and head were a sounding board.

"Aren't you going to help him?"

"Too risky. He started running and it's too far for a rope, even if I had one. You aren't going into a blue funk? You're backing me up?"

"Yes, but," she said, in a dull voice, "it's so horrible."

"It was your idea that shooting him and leaving his body in the jungle would be awkward."

"Yes, I see. I see your plan."

"A drink might help you stand it."

"I can't take it neat."

"There's a spring here if you want a brandy pawnee."

Strathy stopped struggling. Stretching out his legs and lying flat, he noticed that the ooze did not suck so hungrily. He tried to get his breath to yell out for help. But he choked off the call deliberately. He did not want to die screaming. He had played his game, he had lost, he had pegged out. This was the end of it. There was no use begging.

Out of the corners of his eyes as he lay face upward against the glare, he saw the girl dismount. Or else, perhaps, it was the squeak of a saddle that gave him the picture of her. Moung remained in his saddle, preferring no doubt, to watch the final spectacle of his triumph from the added height.

"I shall have to drink to this." Moung's voice was higher in his throat, strained, dry. "Could I have the cup?"

Expanding his cramped lungs, Strathy yelled in a strangled sort of exultation: "Yes, drink to me, Moung! It's all over. But you haven't beaten me after all!"

Moung exclaimed in surprise: "Crikey! Is the fellow actually talking!"

"You've got me taped, Moung, but it's worth it. You've lost the girl! She believes in Maggie Tom. You can thank me for that!"

Moung sat with head lowered and tensed, as if too astounded to answer. He made a queer, fragmentary gesture with one hand, waving it in the air. Then he dismounted, stepped out towards the caked mud and drew his gun.

The girl rushed at him, leaping for his upraised arm. He threw her off, but with the sudden release from her clutch he stumbled backwards.

There was the possibility—fortuitous and incredible—that he had struck the back of his head on a rock. The jungle gods and the jungle mahoos might have connived in mixing this little circumstance, the simple contact of good and evil, the touch of a good rock against a bad skull. Strathy wondered if the girl would take that view of it!

The moonlight poured on her, glimmering and unreal, making a spot of marsh fire out of her hair. When she led a horse out as far as she dared on the caked river bed, Moung lay there, making no protest. Surely a rock had been there ready for him as he fell, catching him on the back of the head. He lay motionless as the girl uncoiled a jungle creeper and hurled it out over the mud.

Strathy caught it with one hand, wound it around his forearm while she snubbed it around the "kidney-pad" saddle and led the horse to solid ground.

She said nothing. Strathy, sinking on the bank, let her wash his wound and bind it. Still Moung lay unperturbed, his fat face turned up, staring at the light. The girl avoided that face like something haunting the corner of her eye. She knew, as Strathy knew, that Moung was dead. She was terribly shaken. When she finished her work she stood back, clinging to a branch to balance her trembling body. In the full glare of the tropic moon she looked pitifully haggard and frail. She was alone now, tragically alone and frightened. She was like a child, lost in the forest, who first discovers that she can never get home. She had no home.

"Don't be worried about what'll happen now," Strathy said, gently. "The sub-collector is at Parak Falls. Old Aberfoyle—a regular sort. I'll take you straight to him to-night. Don't be afraid."

As if she had not heard him she burst out: "This can't be covered up! You took me away from Moung, he followed, he's found dead. It'll all come out—the whole truth. I shall tell it all myself. I shall say right out that I did what I did to save your life." She caught her breath, gibbered. "It was better to see him drop into a merciful sleep than to see you struggling, going down inch by inch. It was a choice between the two of you, wasn't it? I shall never regret, or be ashamed of, what I did. I did it to save a life."

She straightened up, lifting her face so that the light flashed on her white throat. She went on talking to the air.

"I can't remember how it happened. I was trying to get his gun, can't you understand that? I was too crazy to think of a way to get it—until he told me to take a drink. I knew he'd take one with me. Yes, I remember, that's it! He asked for the cup. I gave him water for a brandy pawnee, because that's how he always takes it. A brandy pawnee."

"You were behind a horse!" Strathy exclaimed. "My canteen was on the saddle——"

He got up and went to her. It was she who needed support now. She had sunk to her knees, her head thrown back, resting on the moss. She looked like a doll that has been thrown away and forgotten.

He put his arm around her, lifted her, led her to a horse.

"I think the sub-collector will understand this case. Let's get started for Parak Falls."

"Why go to him? It's not on our way."

"But old Aberfoyle will go down to the plains with us. The three of us will camp together. It's a long trip."

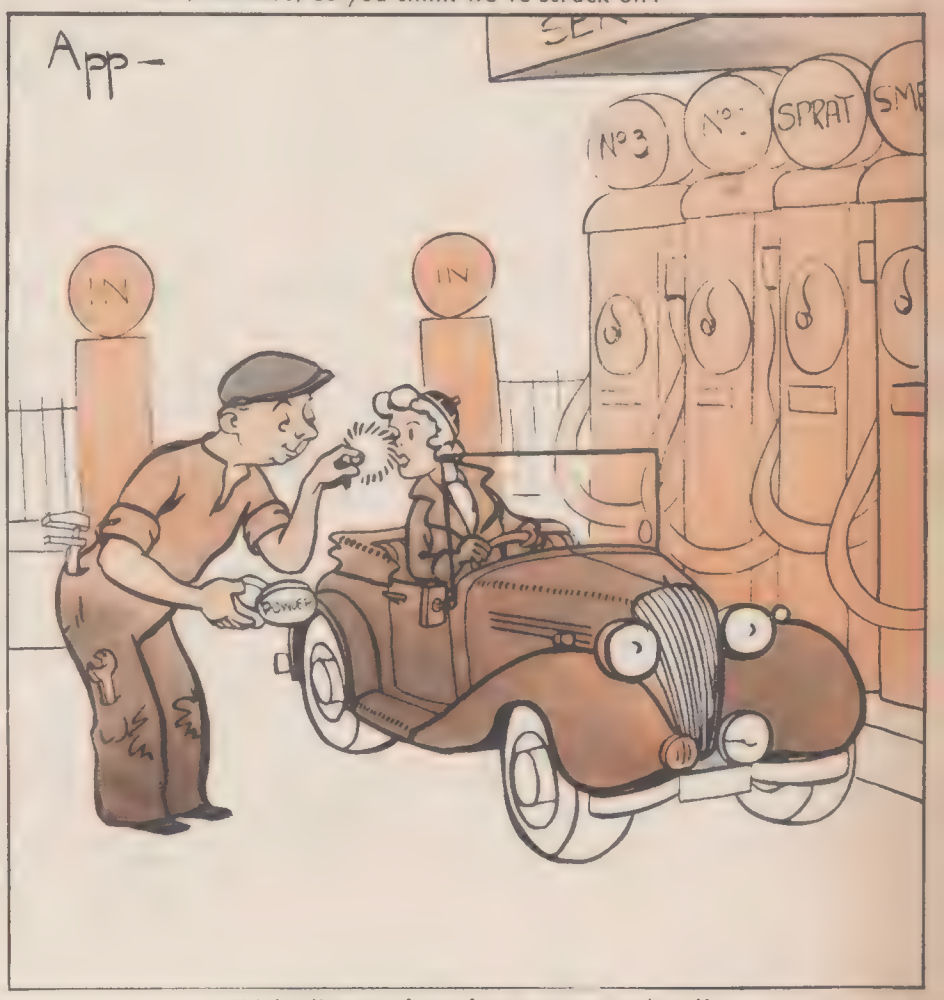
"That doesn't matter," she said. "You and I can make it alone."

" Look, a stowaway! "

Laugh

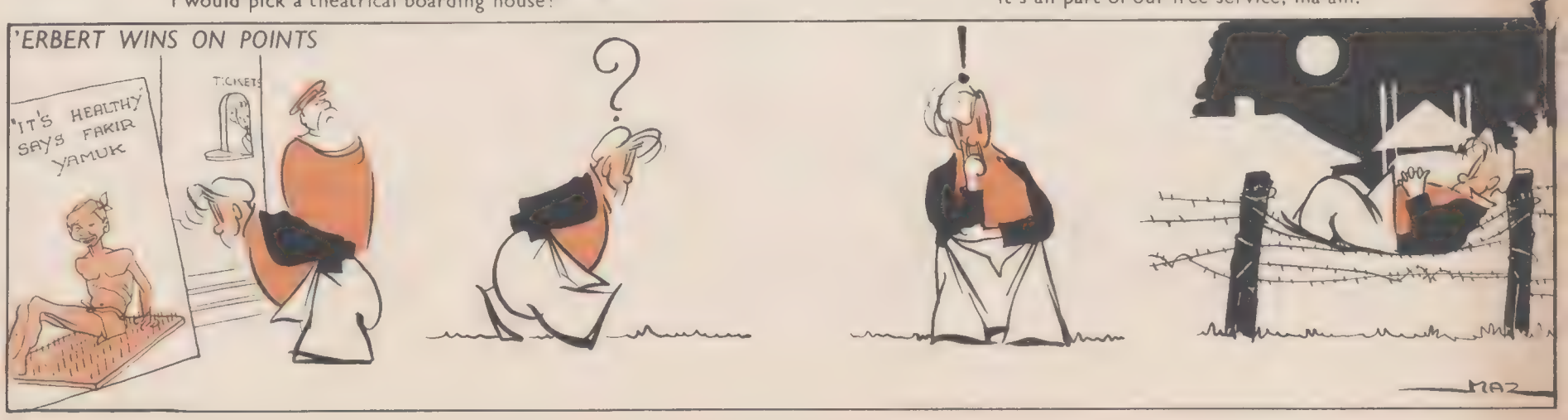
The "PASSING SHOW

" Oh, Herbert, do you think we've struck oil? "



" It's all part of our free service, ma'am."

" I would pick a theatrical boarding house! "



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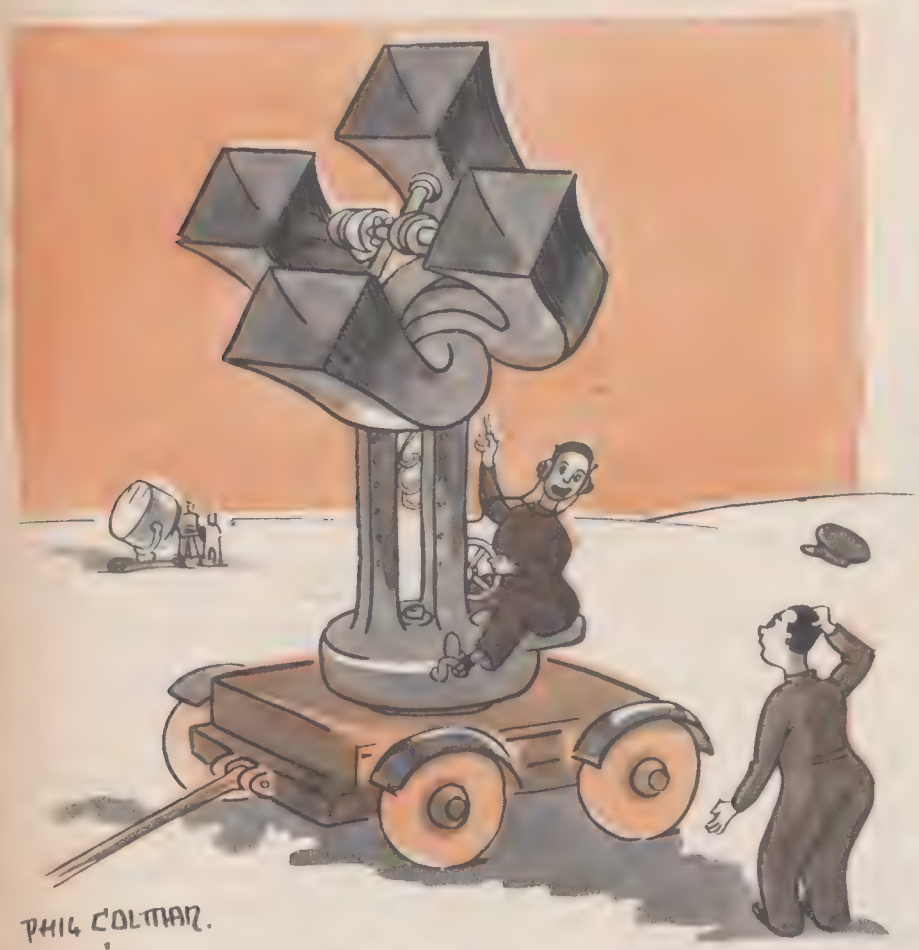

PHIL COLTMAN.

" Oh, sir, I've just heard the first cuckoo! "

" This is the last time I play with a chess champion! "

" We've been using it as a stair-carpet! "

" Had a good trip, kid? "

WHEN BOYS WILL BE GIRLS

If changing Robert into Roberta were merely a matter of adding an "a," the firm of Delicate Missions would have had more chance of living up to its reputation in this little ordeal

BY A. R. V. NELSON-SMITH

ILLUSTRATED BY J. DEWAR MILLS

"MY husband says that nothing can be done about it," sighed Mrs. Goodbody, "but I know you'll find a way out, Mr. Tipp."

"I assure you, madam," said Belvedere Tipp, with his blandest smile, "that your problem shall have my closest consideration." In the course of long years spent as butler to half the noble families in the land before his last master had left him the legacy with which he had started his strange business of Delicate Missions, Limited, Belvedere Tipp had formed very definite opinions on the subject of women; and the little, fair-haired, comfortable, capable-looking Mrs. Goodbody met with his unqualified approval.

Mrs. Goodbody drew off her gloves.

"I feel I can trust you, Mr. Tipp," she said. "Until I met you I was afraid that you might be one of those modern, hustling young men."

Belvedere Tipp stroked his almost bald and slightly egg-shaped head and looked modestly towards the discreetly curtained window. The massive gold watch chain, presented to him by the third Viscount Turret, gleamed proudly across the dignified expanse where his sober black waistcoat embraced his neat, striped trousers.

"Pray proceed, madam," he purred.

"It's a little difficult to begin," said Mrs. Goodbody. "You must be patient with me, Mr. Tipp. The real trouble is my husband's Cousin Emily from Australia, but that isn't all. You see, she's lived there ever since she was jilted as a young girl, and we never dreamt she'd ever come back."

"And now she wants to live with you?" suggested Belvedere Tipp.

"Good gracious, no!" cried Mrs. Goodbody. "Nothing like that! She's only coming on a visit. In fact, she's only going to stay with us for a week. And we're very glad to have her, Mr. Tipp. You see, there's a lot of money in my husband's family and somehow or other she's got it all. And her only other relatives, Ted and Nancy, live in Australia, so it's quite a good thing, don't you think, for us to have her for a visit?"

"Very wise," agreed Belvedere Tipp. "But I gather, madam, that you are not altogether looking forward to seeing her?"

"Oh, yes, we are, Mr. Tipp! It isn't like that at all. From her letters she seems quite a nice sort of person. Why, when she knew I was going to have a baby, she were most generous. And she said that if it was a girl she would send it the finest present a baby ever had. And she implied, Mr. Tipp, that she might leave my daughter everything; Ted and Nancy not having any children. And she kept her word about the present, too! We should never have been able to manage as we did without her cheque. It was a godsend in those days, Mr. Tipp!"

"A very generous action," commented Belvedere Tipp, thoughtfully studying his dignified white spats. "And your cousin still takes an interest in the child, madam?"

"I should think she does! Every month there's a letter for 'Miss Roberta Goodbody' with something in it for her to put by for a rainy day. And each birthday she sends a cheque for us as well. And now she's coming specially to see the child."

"I see," murmured Belvedere Tipp, with a comprehending glance. "You fear that Roberta's attitude towards your benevolent cousin may not be quite—er—diplomatic. In short, madam, the child is likely to prove difficult and, if you will forgive the metaphor, kill the goose that lays the golden eggs?"

"I wish that *was* all," sighed Mrs. Goodbody. "No, it's much worse than that, Mr. Tipp."

"Indeed?" said Belvedere Tipp encouragingly.

Mrs. Goodbody braced herself for an effort.

"Yes," she said, "it would be all right if there *was* a Roberta, but there isn't."

"You mean, madam," exclaimed Belvedore Tipp, severely, "that you have no child?"

"No child! I should think I *have*!" said Mrs. Goodbody, feelingly. "But it's Robert—a boy!"

Belvedere Tipp poured himself a glass of water from the carafe that always stood on his desk.

"You mean, madam," he said, "that you deliberately led your cousin to believe that your child was a girl when it was really a boy?"

"Not deliberately, Mr. Tipp," protested Mrs. Goodbody. "You see, when she wrote she seemed to think it couldn't possibly be anything but a girl and asked us to call it Roberta. So we did the next best thing and called it Robert."

"But, my dear madam," insisted Belvedere Tipp, "you must have been aware of the deception."

"We never dreamt she'd come back to England," said Mrs. Goodbody. "And, knowing how she hates men and how set she was on our having a girl, it seemed such a pity to disappoint her."

Belvedere Tipp leaned back in his chair and pressed the tips of his fingers judicially together.

"What, precisely, do you desire me to do?" he asked.

"Get us out of the jam," said Mrs. Goodbody, succinctly.

"I see! I take it, madam, that there is no chance of your Cousin Emily revising her opinion and—er—taking to the boy?"

"None whatever," said Mrs. Goodbody emphatically. "We did think, Mr. Tipp, of borrowing a little girl for a week, but it's so difficult. . . ."

"Most unwise, madam! A most dangerous course! No, we must find some other way."

"You *will*!" cried Mrs. Goodbody, gratefully.

Belvedere Tipp pondered for a moment. Then:

"The problem interests me," he said. "Yes, I will accept the case. But I shall require your co-operation, madam."

"Anything I can do," promised Mrs. Goodbody eagerly.

"Is the boy aware of the—er—deception?" asked Belvedere Tipp.

"No, Mr. Tipp; he's only nine years old. He thinks Cousin Emily just makes mistakes in calling him Roberta in her letters because she's an old lady. And when Robert writes to her we just add an 'a' at the end of his signature without telling him."

"Very well, Mrs. Goodbody," said Belvedere Tipp, rising, "I will give the matter my very careful consideration. If you will return after lunch I shall have evolved a plan. Good-day to *you*, madam!"

There was a look of challenging hostility behind the steel-rimmed spectacles of Miss Firkin, the prim and indispensable secretary of Belvedere Tipp and the only other member of the firm, as she ushered Mrs. Goodbody out of the office. And when Miss Firkin went in to her chief with The Ledger, a huge brass-bound volume in which Belvedere Tipp entered every little detail of all his cases, the tone in which she spoke was a shade less respectful than usual.

"Mrs. Goodbody must have had a lot to say," she observed, with an acid glance at her wrist watch.

Belvedere Tipp raised his eyebrows.

"It is a very complicated case, Miss Firkin," he said, in mild reproof, "and you will play an important part in solving it."

"Indeed, Mr. Tipp?"

"YES, Miss Firkin. Kindly get out your notebook and pay careful attention to your instructions."

As she wrote Miss Firkin's face grew steadily longer and more frigid, but she knew better than to interrupt. But when the dictation was finished she could contain herself no longer.

"It is, of course, my duty," she said, "to follow your instructions, Mr. Tipp. I think I may say that I have always done so without complaint. But I cannot conceal from you that there are certain elements in this case that are most distasteful to me, quite apart from the fact that you are asking me to do something of which, I need hardly assure you, Mr. Tipp, I have had no experience whatever."

"I know," soothed Belvedere Tipp. "But it will be very useful experience for

Robert's mouth was slowly opening and shutting and his face had gone a dusky red. Belvedere Tipp raised his hand. "I think Roberta has something to say"

you to have. And I shall always be at hand, Miss Firkin."

"Very well, Mr. Tipp. But I must warn you that I will not be responsible if anything untoward happens." Miss Firkin snatched up her notebook and elevated her nose ceilingwards. "Will there be anything else, Mr. Tipp?"

"No thank you, Miss Firkin. Unless—yes—have some lunch sent in to me. Three tongue sandwiches, with mustard, a custard tart, and . . . and. . . ."

"A nice apple, Mr. Tipp?"

"A nice apple, Miss Firkin."

When Mrs. Goodbody came back, Miss Firkin took her straight in to Belvedere Tipp without announcing her, and settled down to an exhaustive exploration of a filing cabinet.

"That will be all, thank you; Miss Firkin," said Belvedere Tipp, pointedly.

Miss Firkin swept out.

"I have solved your problem, madam," said Belvedere Tipp. "Robert must become a girl."

"Mr. Tipp!" gasped Mrs. Goodbody. "You—you—can't know what you're talking about!"

Belvedere Tipp soothed her back into her chair.

"Only for an hour or two," he said. "That's all."

"And what good would that be?" demanded Mrs. Goodbody. "When Cousin Emily's staying for a week?"

"Cousin Emily," said Belvedere Tipp, "would only see Robert for a couple of hours. He—or I should say, *she*, madam—would be staying with her school mistress so that she may receive special coaching for an important examination. Your child, madam, is so brilliant that you cannot, for her sake, miss the opportunity."

"That's all very well," said Mrs. Goodbody, with growing interest, "but where's he going to stay?"

"With my secretary, Miss Firkin. A most admirable woman. She will prepare Robert during the time he is with her and dress him suitably. I, personally, will rehearse him in his part."

Mrs. Goodbody looked doubtfully towards the door.

"Is she really all right?" she asked. "I mean, boys are difficult to manage, you know, and Robert is rather delicate."

"You may rely on Miss Firkin, madam. Besides, the whole matter will be under my personal supervision. You will be at liberty to visit Robert whenever you choose and there is no reason why you shouldn't furnish Miss Firkin with a list of the boy's likes and dislikes, what he has to eat, and so on."

"She'll find out soon enough," said Mrs. Goodbody, grimly. "Still, I'd better see her."

"I will arrange for you to do so, madam. Now, my plan is that on the last afternoon of your Cousin Emily's visit, Miss Firkin and I will bring 'Roberta' along to see her. I shall be, for the purposes of the visit, an eminent professor of mathematics whom 'Roberta's' school mistress is consulting about her exceptional pupil. You may rely upon me, madam, to see that the interview is conducted successfully. Then, as soon as your cousin has gone, well satisfied, Robert can return to you."

"I don't like it," confessed Mrs. Goodbody. "Still, it's better than her finding out. But what are we going to tell Robert?"

"The truth," said Belvedere Tipp. "But not necessarily all the truth, madam. Let him think that your Cousin Emily hates little boys and that she mustn't be offended. And, if I may suggest it, madam, I would advise the promise of a substantial reward if Robert plays his part properly."

Mrs. Goodbody still hesitated.

"Are you quite sure Robert will be all right?" she persisted.

"Perfectly, madam! If you are in any doubt you can always fetch him away. His welfare, of course, must always come before the success of my little plan, but, personally, I have no fear for him, madam."

"Very well, Mr. Tipp," said Mrs. Goodbody, suddenly making up her mind, "I'll do it! But heaven knows what my husband will say!"

"I venture to think, madam," said Belvedere Tipp, holding the door open for his client, "that your husband will not be insensible to the merits of my plan."

Whatever his first reactions may have been, when Belvedere Tipp arrived on the date arranged to collect Robert, Mr. Goodbody was the soul of affability.

"Come in, Tipp!" he called. "Have a drink before you meet the kid!"

Mrs. Goodbody was equally amiable.

"I had a long talk with Miss Firkin," she said, "and I feel sure now that Robert will be all right with her just for those few days. She's promised to send for me at once if there is any difficulty."

"And Robert himself?" inquired Belvedere Tipp. "How does he feel about it?"

"Oh, he's all right now," said Mrs. Goodbody. "He's a bit upset at the idea of putting on girl's clothes, that's all."

"Which is only natural," put in Mr. Goodbody. "And he doesn't think much of his hair being allowed to grow long, either."

Mrs. Goodbody went out and came back leading her son by the hand. At his best Robert was the sort of boy one would pass by warily and hope for the best. Now, with his carroty hair fringing his shoulders, the line of his turned-up nose distorted by an illicit blob of jam, and his round freckled countenance engulfed in a ferocious scowl, he presented a picture that made even Belvedere Tipp wince.

He suffered himself to be dragged across the room and introduced.

"So you're the guy!" he snorted, staring at Belvedere Tipp with unconcealed hostility.

"How do you do, young sir," said the founder of Delicate Missions, Limited, producing from his pocket a glittering new Scout's knife bristling with a choice selection of fearsome looking gadgets.

Robert grabbed it with the speed of a boxer delivering a knock-out punch and retired rapidly out of his mother's reach.

"You may call me Robert," he conceded, generously.

"Thank you, young sir," said Belvedere Tipp, humbly.

"Come along, now!" called Mr. Goodbody briskly, advancing on his son, "Mr. Tipp's ready to start."

"Be a big, brave boy," enjoined Mrs. Goodbody, following her husband.

Misinterpreting their intentions, Robert neatly evaded his parents and made hurriedly for the door, frantically trying to conceal the knife in one of the least accessible portions of his person. Discovering, however, that he was not to be deprived of his new possession and that there was a taxi ride imminent, he became slightly more amenable and even forgot to insist upon sitting next to the driver.

Mr. and Mrs. Goodbody stood on the doorstep waving handkerchiefs until the taxi was out of sight, but their signals went unanswered. Belvedere Tipp was already finding his tact and patience sorely tried in preventing Robert from testing his new knife on any part of the taxi that happened to be convenient.

Miss Firkin was waiting for them at her flat. At the sight of the unwonted redness of her chief's face and the manner in which he was propelling Robert before him, her mouth set in a straight line of apprehensive disapproval.

"Welcome, little man!" she said, without enthusiasm. "And how are mummy and daddy?"

"Aw, shucks!" sniffed Robert, wandering scornfully around the room. "What a mouldy hole!"

Suddenly there was an ear-splitting squawk in a rich variety of language and tone.

Miss Firkin controlled herself with considerable difficulty.

"You are *not* to touch the wireless!" she said.

"Why?" asked Robert, producing his knife with an eager eye.

Belvedere Tipp made frantic signs, and Miss Firkin discovered a large box of chocolates in the cupboard. Robert goggled and settled down to it.

"Keep him eating," advised Belvedere Tipp in a whisper, as he picked up his hat. "And there will be no need for you to come to the office, Miss Firkin, if you think it unwise to leave him."

But the next morning Miss Firkin did appear at the office, both early and agitated.

"He's locked in," she announced, defiantly, "and I don't care if he howls the house down. A more disgusting little boy, Mr. Tipp, I have never seen!"

"Perhaps he's hungry," suggested Belvedere Tipp. "If you require more chocolates, Miss Firkin, you may take the money from the petty cash."

"He was sick all night," said Miss Firkin, with a shudder.

"Then perhaps I had better have a word with him, personally, Miss Firkin."

There was an ominous silence in the flat when Miss Firkin and her chief arrived. The spare room looked as

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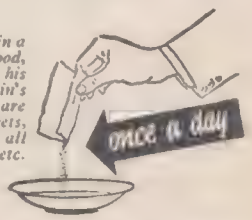

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though it had been struck by a hurricane, but the hurricane had passed on. Sundry holes in the plaster of the walls and a couple of empty, overturned jam jars in the pantry blazed Robert's trail. But of Robert there was no sign.

"Robert!" called Belvedere Tipp, sternly. "Come here, young sir!"

Not even an echo answered him.

Suddenly, in the dining-room, Miss Firkin let out a squeal of indignation and pointed to the fireplace. That there had been a fall of soot was evident; that it had been materially assisted by Robert was equally evident from the blackened and discarded ceiling brush lying in the fender and the sooty footmarks leading out into the bathroom.

"Heavens!" cried Miss Firkin, in outraged tones. "Mr. Tipp. This is beyond everything!"

Belvedere Tipp hurried after his secretary into the bathroom. Along the whole length of the bath, were neat little mounds of soot. Black, finger-daubed messages of doubtful accuracy and spelling vied with crude, sooty thumb-nail caricatures of Belvedere Tipp and Miss Firkin for pride of place on the white-tiled walls. The towels had the appearance of badly smudged chess boards and a couple of shattered tumblers and a squeezed-out tube of tooth paste were wrapped up in what was left of the curtain.

But it was on the open window, covered with black fingermarks, that Belvedere Tipp's eyes were riveted. There was no doubt about Robert's means of exit.

"Well," said Miss Firkin, grimly challenging. "He's gone—the fiend!"

"Boys," Belvedere Tipp reminded her, "*will* be boys, Miss Firkin. Still, I must confess this is a contingency I did not allow for. We must consider our next step."

They were not left long in which to consider. While Belvedere was assuring his secretary that the havoc created by Robert would be paid for by the firm, there came a loud ringing at the bell.

Outside on the landing, writhing in the grasp of the burly hall porter, was Robert, black from head to foot, his clothes in tatters and tears of rage streaking his face with white channels.

"This your little boy?" inquired the porter, cheerfully.

Miss Firkin reddened and choked.

"I am responsible for the child," said Belvedere Tipp, coming forward.

"Lumme!" exclaimed the porter, with an incredulous glance at Miss Firkin, "Well, guv'nor, I sees 'im shinning dahn the drainpipe, so I chases 'im, an' catches 'im in the coal 'ole. A proper run 'e give me, too!"

"I think," said Belvedere Tipp, gingerly taking hold of Robert and drawing him inside, "that you had better give him a bath, Miss Firkin."

"That," she said, "I positively decline to do, Mr. Tipp."

With an air of a man making an extremely distasteful decision, Belvedere Tipp took a firmer grip on Robert.

"Very well," he said, "then I must do it myself. And in future, Miss Firkin, you had better not let Master Robert out of your sight. If any matter requiring your attention should arise at the office, I will telephone you."

The next five days became engraved on Miss Firkin's mind as one of the major ordeals of her life. But, at the cost of her own nervous system, Belvedere Tipp's entire resources of tact and patience, and innumerable items in the Delicate Missions petty cash book, some idea of the part he was to play when he met Cousin Emily gradually soaked into Robert's mind.

But when the final stage of his preparations arrived and Robert was faced with an imposing array of girl's clothing, Belvedere Tipp had momentary visions of his first failure since the firm of Delicate Missions, Limited, was established. With only ten minutes to go, Robert entrenched himself firmly between the bed and the wall and showed himself completely indifferent to pleading, cajolery and threats.

"Can't I wear nothing of my own?" he demanded.

"No, young sir," said Belvedere Tipp, for the tenth time.

"Not even my own pants," said Robert, in tones of deepest disgust.

"No, young sir," repeated Belvedere Tipp. "Now just be a good boy, and you shall have a bicycle to-morrow."

"Want a motor car," said Robert hopefully.

But the bicycle, when he was convinced that the offer was a firm one, finally induced Robert to overcome his scruples and, punctually at the prearranged time, his hands firmly held by Belvedere Tipp on one side and Miss Firkin on the other, Robert arrived back at his own home.

When she opened the door, Mrs. Goodbody, prepared as she was for Robert's transformation, wilted visibly. The blue ribbon that tied back his hair was already showing signs of frequent fingering, the dainty white silk frock that Miss Firkin had been at such pains to purchase was rapidly assuming the characteristics of a dust-sheet and, in spite of their thickness, the black stockings that concealed Robert's excessively masculine legs boasted a couple of sizable rents.

Fortunately, Cousin Emily's eyes were weak and she wore thick blue spectacles.

"So this is Roberta!" she exclaimed, holding out her hands and peering eagerly at the apparition before her. "Come and kiss me, my dear."

Cautiously prodded, Robert obeyed, retiring immediately and precipitously to the centre of the room where he adopted a self-conscious pose, with his long arms hanging awkwardly by his sides after an unsuccessful search for his trouser pockets.

Cousin Emily leaned forward with benevolent expectancy. Robert's mouth was slowly opening and shutting and his face had gone a dusky red. Mrs. Goodbody came anxiously forward but Belvedere Tipp raised his hand to stop her.

"I think Roberta has something to say."

"Yes," exploded Robert, his brow furrowed with the enormous strain upon his memory. "Dear Cousin Emily, welcome to our home we have always wanted to see you—to see you—to see—oh, yes, I'm studying that's why I'm not here I'm doing very well I like my studies I'm best at . . . at . . ."

"Mathematics," prompted Miss Firkin, "Roberta is exceptionally good at mathematics, isn't she, Professor Tipp?"

"I have seldom seen a more promising child," said Belvedere Tipp, "in fact, I . . ."

". . . mathermaticks," rushed on Robert, eagerly grasping his cue, "Miss Firkin says I'm the best—best—girl what she's ever had an' if I work proper . . ."

"Sweet child," beamed Cousin Emily, "such beautiful thoughts . . ."

"I'm sure you must be dying for some tea, Cousin Emily," interposed Mrs. Goodbody, with an anxious eye on Robert who had just spotted the cake stand.

But she was too late. With an unerring sense of impending frustration, Robert dived in an attempt to forestall his mother. Miss Firkin rushed to Mrs. Goodbody's assistance, while Belvedere Tipp and Mr. Goodbody made simultaneous attempts to catch hold of Robert. Like so many armies descending upon a common objective they all landed together. The cake stand shot up in the air and cascaded its contents neatly over Cousin Emily. Robert rolled gracefully out of the *mêlée*, his silk dress draped prettily around his neck, and regarded Cousin Emily triumphantly with a doughnut in each hand and another in his mouth.

It was Belvedere Tipp who brought order out of chaos. Almost before Mrs. Goodbody had recovered her scattered senses, Robert had been swept aside, the last crumb of mangled cake had been removed, and Cousin Emily, cleaned up, was benevolently assuring all and sundry that it was the sort of accident that might happen anywhere. But of Robert there was no sign, and Cousin Emily was beginning to get fidgety about her train.

"I'll find him," whispered Belvedere Tipp to Mrs. Goodbody.

But Robert was not in the pantry. Nor was he in the coal cellar or any other likely or unlikely part of the house. With growing apprehension Belvedere Tipp was beginning a second tour of the premises when Mrs. Goodbody came running up in a state of considerable agitation.

"She's just going," she said breathlessly, "and she insists upon seeing Rob—Roberta to say good-bye. It'll ruin everything if we can't find him. Oh, Mr. Tipp, where can he be? Where have you looked? Where? And there's no sign of him?" A sudden thought struck Mrs. Goodbody. "Have you looked on the manure heap?" she asked.

"No, madam!" said Belvedere Tipp in shocked tones.

"That's where he'll be," cried Mrs. Goodbody, with grim certainty, "This way!"

The maternal instinct was right. When they came upon him Robert was basking on top of the manure heap, happily engaged in contaminating his feminine attire with all the thoroughness at his command.

"Get him," cried Mrs. Goodbody, "and hold on to him!"

"But, my dear madam," protested Belvedere Tipp, "We can't take him in like this. . . ."

But Mrs. Goodbody had vanished. In a moment she was back again with a large shawl, which she wound round her noisome offspring, and a bottle of eau-de-cologne which she emptied over him before he knew what was happening.

"Now. . . !" she exclaimed grimly.

"Come, young sir," said Belvedere Tipp.

Cousin Emily was waiting in the hall with her luggage. At the sight of Robert her face lit up.

"Early to bed," she said, still peering with difficulty through her spectacles, "That's a good girl! But to-night you must have a little treat. I'm going a long, long journey and I may not see you again, so I've brought you an extra special present."

Robert surged forward. Cousin Emily sniffed.

"Bath salts at your age!" she exclaimed. "You lucky little girl."

"You said present!" Robert reminded her.

Cousin Emily pointed to a large case. Robert turned modestly away, disentangled his knife which, with the caution of long experience, he had tied round his waist with a piece of string, and fell eagerly upon the case. Off came the top, down fell the sides, away tumbled wads of straw and there, in all its shining glory, stood a super doll's pram.

For one ghastly moment it seemed as though Robert would burst. But once again Belvedere Tipp came to the rescue by tactfully thrusting under his infuriated eyes the large newspaper advertisement of a bicycle, accompanied by a tensely-whispered "Remember!"

For a fraction of a minute everything hung in the balance. Then the thought of things to come triumphed. Treating Cousin Emily to one last withering look, Robert pulled his shawl closely round himself and turned away.

"I'm going to be sick," he announced.

When Cousin Emily had gone Mr. Goodbody gratefully handed Belvedere Tipp his cheque.

"Frankly, Tipp," he said, "I didn't think you'd manage it."

"It worked splendidly," chimed in Mrs. Goodbody, "She never suspected a thing! Her last words were 'I think Roberta's a delightful child. How glad you must be that you didn't have a boy.'"

"Ah, well," said Belvedere Tipp, picking up his hat, "A rose, madam, by any other name would smell as sweet."

It was several months later that during his after dinner stroll in the park, Belvedere Tipp unexpectedly met Mrs. Goodbody again.

"And how is Robert?" he inquired politely, "And Cousin Emily?"

"Cousin Emily!" snorted Mrs. Goodbody. "Don't talk to me about Cousin Emily! After all she said about hating boys, too! Of course, Ted and Nancy *would* have to have one—after they've been married ten years. And the old fool's made it her heir. Says it's so much easier for a man to carry on the family name!"

"PLUM CAKE OF HATE"

MR. BASIL PEEK, formerly of 6 Ninth Avenue, Heworth, York, but now of "The Rosary," 106 Lawrence Street, York, a writer of short stories, has drawn our attention to a character of an author of a similar name portrayed in the short story, "The Plum Cake of Hate" in issue of PASSING SHOW—October 30, 1937.

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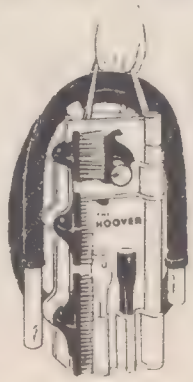

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Only those who suffer can realise the utter misery, the maddening torture, the dreadful weakness that backache brings. Yet thousands of chronic sufferers go on in their pain and weakness until perhaps they have to give up, becoming bedridden; mother unable to carry out her daily duties; wage-earners lose money; pleasures just a thing of the past. Sufferers, you must realise that awful Backache is Nature's urgent signal of deep-seated trouble within the body—Kidney Trouble.

Weak kidneys—yes, that is what makes life a misery for so many, many people, although they do not know it. Are you going to stay crippled by pain, or will you prove how quickly, how surely and permanently, you can end your trouble for good by taking a course of De Witts Brand Kidney and Bladder Pills.

De Witts Pills, in 24 hours, show you how they have acted directly on the kidneys. If you will only persevere, their cleansing, tonic action will rid your system of the poisons and impurities that cause your pain. But most important of all, your kidneys are restored to health and they then keep the system free from poisons.

They are safe and sure in all cases of

RHEUMATISM BACKACHE
JOINT PAINS LUMBAGO
or any Urinary Irregularities

Sold only in the white, blue and gold box, at all chemists, price 1/3, 3/- and 5/-. Be sure you get the genuine—

DE WITTS BRAND **KIDNEY AND BLADDER PILLS**

Spotting the VIRGINIA HALL'S PAGE

WELL, March is here again We'll soon be looking out last year's suits, hoping we haven't grown out of them and maybe finding that we have. Maybe a new suit will therefore become the order of the month.

But we must remember that with March and spring suits there also come days that are cold and treacherous and the wind, whistling through our nice-looking jackets, makes us wish that we hadn't sacrificed comfort for smartness.

I have been caught out so often that instead of risking the strain of mustard baths I designed something to wear under a suit to keep you really warm. It doesn't take up much room either.

It's a "dicky," but a "dicky" with a difference, for you wear it on your back. All you need is a piece of material of the colour you like and just a little more than twice the size of your back, a piece of flannel once the size of your back, a piece of tape long enough to tie around your waist and some bias binding.

Cut the flannel in a rectangle of the following measurements; the top ten inches, the sides and the bottom each eighteen inches. Now sew this piece of flannel between two pieces of the material of the same dimensions and bind the two sides. Make a cravat of the material and join the middle of one side of this to the 10-inch side of the back piece. Bind the bottom side with a piece of tape leaving enough each end to tie round your waist.

Your "dicky" is finished, and all you have to do is to tie the cravat round your neck, the tape round your waist, put your thinnest blouse under your suit and you'll still be as warm as a pie.

★ Spring is also fur time. It's not a bad idea to buy a fur coat just now. They are often cheaper. This is the time, too, when it is so pleasant to be able to slip a fur coat over your suit, especially such a coat as the model in the picture shown here.

This is a new style "trotter" coat, made from fine, soft quality pony skins, which by the way are particularly hardwearing. It is made in shades of rich brown and black.

A coat like this would be a really good buy, for it is only twelve guineas, yet it would serve you equally well in town or the country. A coat such as this looks grand with tweeds and also with a plain black town street frock and a dressier hat, so you see you could really get your money's worth from it.

The firm manufacturing the model illustrated (and many others, too) have a method by which you can pay for furs by a divided payment plan.

The price of the furs you choose is divided into ten equal parts, one part to be paid each month.

Nothing whatever is added to the cost for this credit. By buying a coat, or a fur, this way, you get something far better than if you were paying two or three guineas for an inferior article just because you haven't got the money to spare at the moment.

If you are interested in these furs and this scheme, bringing them within most people's purses, do write to me and I will tell you more about them and send you an illustrated catalogue. Please mark your envelope "Furs."

★ When I dine in a Russian restaurant I always choose Shashlik, for not only do I like it as a dish but also, to be quite honest, I am delighted by the ceremony with which it is served. I remember having it at La Maisonette Russe, a restaurant in New York, where the waiters were all dressed as Cossacks and the band was playing Russian melodies, the words of which were being sung by Russians in peasant costume.

Fashion

I ordered my Shashlik. Along it came, pieces of meat stuck through by a very long skewer and borne, flaming, to my table by the Cossack waiter. The restaurant was very dimly lit, which made the effect created by my Shashlik even better.

I know we can't have such exciting dishes served by Cossacks in a true Russian surrounding every day, but I've discovered a way you can make Shashlik quite simply. Here is the recipe.

For each portion you want a metal skewer about four inches long. On each skewer stick two cubes of veal each one 1½ inches square, from which skin and fat have been trimmed.

Between the cubes stick an anchovy fillet, half a green olive, and a slice of tomato. Brush well with butter, broil quickly and serve piping hot, skewers and all. Garnish with lemon. Serve with buttered rice.

★ Another sign of spring is spots; this year it's spots with a vengeance, but nothing to do with our complexions, thank goodness.

It's our "undies" that have developed spots this time. I have seen the most entrancing nighties, some in silk, some in cotton, all spotted with the same sort of spots. Tiny things, sometimes dark on a light background, sometimes light on a dark background.

They're most attractive, very plainly made, and only trimmed with frills of the same material. Some of them have little bolero-like jackets made of the same stuff, but the opposite colouring of background and spots.

Also, I've been seeing spots on gloves. Just French knots scattered all over a plain pair of gloves. This struck me as being a very simple and smart touch to an outfit, which you provide yourself in an hour or two. Try embroidering spots on plain fabric gloves, and so go all springlike in the approved manner.

★ Talking the other day with a well-known beauty specialist, a woman who has seen and interviewed thousands and thousands of women, all intent on chasing the same elusive figure of Beauty, I learned what a tragedy superfluous hair could be for many really attractive women.

The beauty specialist said she had met so many otherwise nice-looking women, handicapped only by this affliction, that she has made a study of this fault and had produced an infallible treatment for removing such blemishes.

It is a wax preparation, a really safe and reliable method of removing hair from the face. It is simple to use, absolutely harmless, and it definitely weakens the growth.

Obviously the best method of removing the growth is to destroy the roots. And that is the idea behind this wax preparation. The wax is supplied in a tiny pan which should be held over a small flame until the wax melts. Test the heat on the inside of the thumb-joint and when this is comfortably warm, apply the wax to the face, doing only a small portion at a time.

When the wax has set hard, hold the skin firmly between the fingers of one hand and rip off the wax with the other. It may sound rather brutal, but really it is not.

If you are interested, you can buy this preparation for 3s. 6d. Write to me if you want to know more, marking the envelope "Wax."

★ You'd imagine, wouldn't you, that a film actress taking the part of a heroine in a jungle film wouldn't need many personal attendants, for after all there's nothing very dressy about a sarong! But that's not so.

Dorothy Lamour wears nothing but a sarong in her new picture, *Her Jungle Love*, yet she requires a staff larger than in any of the dressy films in which she wore everything in the wardrobe!

Five people are engaged in "dressing" her for her part—because the picture is the first jungle film ever to be made in Technicolour and because she wears nothing but a sarong. For an ordinary production only one make-up expert would be required, but in this film one is necessary to prepare the face of the actress while another applies the "native girl" colouring to the rest of the expansively exposed limbs, shoulders and back.

The Lamour "frocks" in the jungle role weigh just four ounces apiece, but someone from the wardrobe department has to be on hand all the time with needle and thread!

Most difficult job of all is that of hairdresser who looks after the yard-long brunette tresses of the actress. Every night, when Dorothy Lamour comes in from her day's work, the hairdresser washes and shampoos her hair, for the colour camera requires that it must glisten every day, and all day the same hairdresser hovers around her, with a comb constantly posed for an adjusting flick.

So a sarong doesn't always mean simplicity.

★

If you are interested in any of the things mentioned in this page please write to Virginia Hall, c/o "The Passing Show," 92 Long Acre, W.C.2, for she is very willing to help in such matters

★

A TRIPLE TRIUMPH

MISS JOAN SKEELS

MISS PATRICIA MEDINA

for

DOGE CREAM

THE MARVELLOUS COMPLEXION RESTORER

and

ZEE-KOL Almond Oil SOAP

Creates Beauty and Preserves Beauty and has a Beautiful Lingering Perfume

MISS ELIZABETH HADDON

IN THE GREAT "Daily Mail" BEAUTY CONTEST

ZEE-KOL SOAP and DOGE CREAM USERS WERE AWARDED

1st (Section 4) 1st (Section 1) & 3rd (Section 1) PRIZES

HOWEVER sallow or patchy your complexion may be we guarantee to make it perfect with Doge Cream. It works miracles on the skin and is the most ideal complexion cream on the market. Doge Cream is not a vanishing cream. It does not dry up the skin, but keeps the skin supple, firm and youthful.

When thinking of other face creams remember that Doge Cream is not like any of these.

It is the most remarkable and the most perfect cream that has ever been blended. It contains Almond Oil, which is the most expensive oil one can use in a face cream, and does not grow hair. It preserves the skin and takes away all wrinkles and leaves the skin smooth as a child's. It was taken from an old Venetian recipe, and has a beautiful perfume that lingers over the skin until it is washed away. Over a thousand of the leading Society women use Doge Cream.

In Tubes - 6D. and 9D.

In Pots - 1/- and 2/-

A REVELATION in transforming the worst skin in three nights into a most beautiful satiny and peach-like complexion. Never before has a soap of this description been given to the public. It is made of the purest oils, and has a beautiful perfume that lingers over the skin until washed away.

One must not think of the cheap 3d. tablets of soap when thinking of Zee-Kol Almond Oil Soap.

This is the wholesale price of the materials used in most of the advertised soaps. Compare this price to Almond Oil, which is 5/6 per lb., and which is used in Zee-Kol Almond Oil Soap.

PALM OIL costs 4d. per lb.

ALMOND OIL costs 5/6 per lb.

It is easily seen why Zee-Kol Almond Oil Soap is the most expensive to make, as it is very rare to get Almond Oil in a Soap at all. The price of Almond Oil will prove to everyone that there is no soap in the world so marvellous as Zee-Kol Almond Oil Soap.

1/- LARGE TABLET NOW 6d.

DOGE CREAM AND ZEE-KOL SOAP ARE PERFECT TOGETHER

Obtainable from all Chemists and Stores or direct from

SHAVEX ZEE-KOL Co., Ltd. (Dept. S.16), 40 Blenheim Road, Upper Holloway, N19

BALDNESS *defeated!*

Read Mr. Harris's letter below — his photograph shows what a fine head of hair he has now. Silvikrin is sold by chemists, hairdressers and stores (Lotion 1/6, Pure Silvikrin 6/-).

Cranebrook House, Sumner Hill,
Nr. Lichfield.

Dear Sirs,

I had a nervous breakdown 18 months ago, which caused my hair to fall out very badly. I had bald patches - one 4½ inches long and 3 inches wide. I had a small strip of hair in front and then I was bald right over with a small bit of hair at the back. I saw your advertisement and got a bottle of Silvikrin: after my third I found my head had lost all its bald patches. To-day I have a very good head of hair - Silvikrin is worth its weight in gold.

(sgd.) Joseph Harris.

Silvikrin

DOES GROW HAIR

L-50-H

PAIN AFTER MEALS

Is your stomach still struggling with your last meal? You're gasping with wind and doubled up with indigestion. Why? Because your stomach is always too acid. It sours every mouthful. It turns meat into leather. You can stop these agonising attacks this very day by taking 'Milk of Magnesia' Tablets. They relieve acidity at once. No matter what you eat, your stomach makes easy work of digesting it. No sour repeating, no heartburn, no flatulence, not a twinge of your old agony.

What about your next meal? Are you going to submit to torture when 'Milk of Magnesia' Tablets will save you? Make that meal the test. Get a tin of the Tablets now and have them in readiness. You'll be thankful you tried them. Neat flat tins for the pocket, 6d. and 1/-. Also family sizes, 2/- and 3/6. Of all chemists.

'Milk of Magnesia' is the trade mark of Phillips' preparation of Magnesia.

VAPEX CLEARS HEAD COLDS

Breathe the Vapex vapour from your handkerchief by day and from the end of your pillow by night. It kills the germs, relieves stuffiness, prevents the spread of infection.

From your Chemist 2/- & 3/-

V162 THOMAS KERFOOT & CO LTD.

MODERN MADNESS

When a man plans murder he ought to make sure of his facts and not just trust to an electric current

BY STEPHEN PHILLIPS

ILLUSTRATED BY COLIN ORME

It was Candida who gave him the idea, really. She was coming out of the little village post-office and Boyd was sitting at the wheel of the old car, smoking a cigarette. He noticed idly that there was a new shop opened next to the post-office and Parnell's wife had her nose pressed to the glass and there was an expression almost of avarice in her eyes.

Boyd watched her for a time and his eyes were half-closed and there was an expression in his face which might have puzzled Parnell, had he seen it.

Getting out of the car, he walked to where she stood.

"What's the attraction? New hats?"

She turned, her eyes round and big, and caught at his sleeve; and the touch of her hand sent the blood pounding suddenly in his veins.

He averted his face sharply, afraid she might detect what was in his eyes.

"I'd just adore one of those new electric clocks," he heard her say, almost breathlessly.

Driving back, Boyd didn't talk much. His brain was too busy. He had nothing but contempt for Parnell. The man was a useless, contemptible relic of ancient Times. There were occasions when his methods seemed to Boyd to strike a note of actual barbarity. Why, it had required all Boyd's persuasive eloquence to induce him to replace that lumbering old pony-cart with this squeaking, antiquated old car.

"But you can't run electric clocks off the gas main," said Boyd, suddenly and Parnell's wife glanced at him.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

Boyd made no reply. There was a frown between his eyes as he ran the car into the big shed and slammed the heavy doors. Then he stood an instant, staring fixedly in front of him. He heard Parnell come to the kitchen door, heard his voice, deep, sullen-sounding.

"That you, Candida?"

Boyd followed her into the farmhouse. The pallid beam of light which came from the old-fashioned gas-jet seemed to irritate Boyd almost beyond endurance. It reminded him of some prehistoric flame burning in an Eskimo's ice-house.

Over supper, he watched Parnell's wife, furtively; he had sat and watched her in that way for many a dreary evening. An oil lamp burned on the supper table. Parnell ate steadily, his mind on his food, apparently. But once, putting down his knife and fork, he looked across the table at Boyd—and, just at that moment, Boyd happened to be staring rather insolently at Candida.

She kept her eyes cast down, but a sort of colour came stealing into her cheeks—a colour which reminded Boyd of the bloom on a wet autumn rose.

The woman came in to clear the table. Boyd continued to think. Here, he reflected, was a really decent little farm going to rack and ruin, all because of the old-fashioned prejudice of its owner. If he —Boyd—owned Fairholme Acres——. Well, that might be a different story altogether. His mind, sharp and clear as a diamond-cutter, visualised a *new* farmstead, a modern and prosperous farmstead —with deep cellars artificially cooled or heated, new barns and outhouses, modern conveyances, modern tractors, electrically-heated cowsheds. . . .

He watched Parnell contemptuously. He was grumbling about something or other. Boyd heard him ask Candida what she'd done with the new packet of night-lights.

"'night," he growled at Boyd.

"Good night," Boyd said, almost pleasantly.

It was the custom to be pleasant to people about to die. Even the poor wretch in the condemned cell. . . .

Boyd was out and about before it got light. There were calves in Orchard Meadow to be looked to. The lane from Brambling ran through Orchard Meadow. It climbed the steep hill beyond, to the market town of Saimsworthy.

In the darkness of early dawn, as he stood there, he heard an approaching rumble. It was the huge milk truck from Brambling going into Marlow Deeping. Boyd watched the heavy truck swing round the bend, the milk churns rattling, and roar away down the lane, gathering speed for the steep climb to the top of the hill.

He glanced at the watch on his wrist, casually at first and then with sharp, curious intentness. It was precisely ten minutes past five in the morning. That milk truck was as regular as clockwork. It was never more than a few seconds late or early.

For a long time, his eyes fixed, Boyd stood there; until an unearthly sort of light began to spread through the sky.

He went into the cowsheds. He stared aghast, as he always did, at the broken, crumbling walls. Outside one of the sheds a hand-truck stood. But, like most things about the place, it was in pretty poor condition. One of the wheels was missing.

Boyd began to look for that missing wheel. An idea was taking shape in his mind. . . . He found it eventually, green and rotting, in one of the barns. Boyd stood and looked at it thoughtfully; and, still deep in thought, he returned to the farmhouse.

When breakfast was over, he walked out into the yard behind Parnell.

"Looks like snow," Parnell grunted, and started to light his pipe.

"I've been thinking," said Boyd.

"You have, have you?" Parnell growled. "Well, what's on your mind now, Boyd?"

Boyd looked round at the farm buildings.

"You engaged me," he said, "to put this farm on a paying basis, didn't you?"

"Well, that's so. But——"

"Just a moment. For the last five or six years you've been losing money here. Right again?"

"Right again," Parnell said, but his face had a kind of leer on itas he stared at Boyd.

"Well, from now on, I'm going to alter all that and earn my salary fairly," Boyd said. "All I want is a free hand in everything. Do I get it?"

Parnell started to walk on, stopped, came back again. In his eyes, as he looked

(*please turn to page* 28)

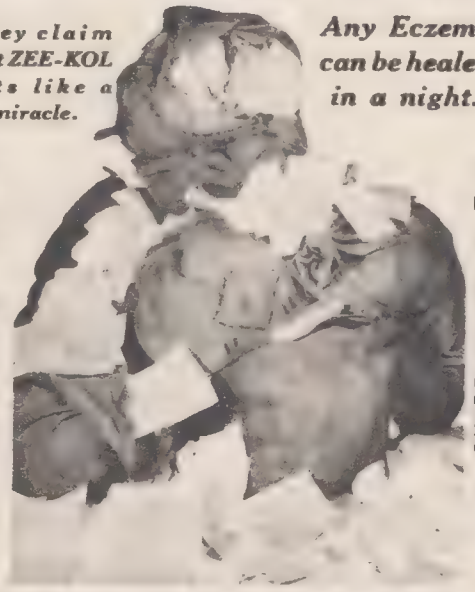
He put his hands under Parnell's armpits and dragged him out of the kitchen into the yard. It was a bit of a job

ZEE-KOL HEALS SKIN DISEASES IN A NIGHT

(BRAND)

THESE ARE ONLY A FEW OF THE SACKFULS OF TESTIMONIALS RECEIVED FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

They claim that ZEE-KOL acts like a miracle.



Any Eczema can be healed in a night.

BURNS. Zee-Kol takes all pain away and no blister will form.

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ABSCESSES. "Zee-Kol instantly draws out all inflammation and the abscess is healed in twenty-four hours."

Many may promise a wonderful remedy, but there is nothing like Zee-Kol. Beware of imitations.

ZEE-KOL is, without doubt, the most wonderful skin remedy of all time. The cruellest Skin Diseases, such as Ulcers, Eczema, Abscesses, etc., are rapidly and completely banished, and Pimples, Blackheads, Boils, Rashes, etc., disappear like magic. Never was known any remedy like Zee-Kol. Where it touches, the skin takes on a finer and healthier glow. Zee-Kol kills all germs that enter the skin—that is why it heals the moment it touches the skin. It destroys everything unhealthy to the skin. No skin disease can resist it.

Forget it being a Patent Medicine. This is the only way we have of letting the world know of Zee-Kol's marvellous power of skin healing. There is nothing in the world to compare with Zee-Kol.

Do not hesitate. Go straight to your chemist and get a box of Zee-Kol and rest absolutely assured that your skin troubles will speedily be banished.

Zee-Kol heals in record time. Eczema, all kinds of Ulcers, Chilblains, Leg Troubles, Severe Burns, etc.

Obtainable from all Chemists and Stores

in the new 6d. tin

Larger sizes 1/3 and 3/-

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SHAVEX ZEE-KOL CO., LTD.
(Dept.ZK22), 40, Blenheim Road, Upper Holloway, London, N.19

NO SOAP SHAVEX REVOLUTION IN SHAVING NO BRUSH

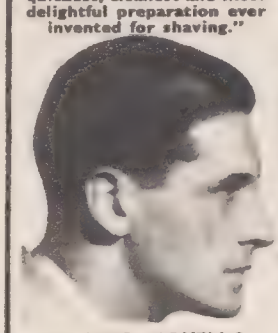
Millions are now using SHAVEX all over the World. Beware of imitations

Throw away your soap and brush and use the up-to-date method of shaving which takes a quarter of the time. We guarantee that one can have a perfect shave in two minutes with Shavex.

MR. LESLIE HENSON, the famous actor, writes: "I use 'Shavex' every time I shave, and think it is the quickest, cleanest and most delightful preparation ever invented for shaving."

SHAVEX is without a doubt the most perfect way of Shaving that man can desire. What is more simple than just wetting the beard and smearing on a little Shavex — and then a perfect shave? Shavex contains Almond Oil, which is a fine skin food for the face. You shave in a quarter of the time that is taken by any other method and you rub the rest of the Shavex into the skin—this takes away the wrinkles and keeps the face in a perfect condition. Fancy every day scrubbing one's face with very hot water and soap full of soda. One has only one's face for a lifetime and it should be treated kindly. Oils in SHAVEX will keep the face young and without wrinkles, and after shaving you will always feel as fresh as a daisy. The Shavex Cream makes the bristles of the beard stand up, when they are easily shaved with the razor. The ordinary creams and soaps flatten the beard, and so it is impossible to get the perfect shave. If grass is lying down it is more difficult for the mower to cut than if it is standing up. It is the same with the beard and Shavex. SHAVEX gets between all the hairs and forces the beard to stand up, and one can cut it so easily and get a perfect shave.

MR. JACK BUCHANAN, the great actor-producer, writes: "I find 'Shavex' absolutely perfect for shaving. It is most refreshing and so easy, and it gives me the best shave I have ever had."



MR. IVOR NOVELLO, the celebrated author and composer, writes: "'Shavex' is a really splendid invention. I am so often asked to recommend preparations and can so seldom do so, but in this case my appreciation of your 'Shavex' is genuine. I shall always use it."

TRY A SHAVEX BLADE, THE KEENEST AND BEST BLADE ON THE MARKET, PRICE 2d. INSTEAD OF 4d.

SHAVEX is sold in 6d., 1/- and 1/6 Tubes and 1/6 Pots

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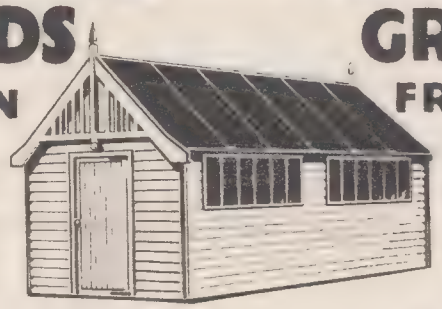
SHAVEX ZEE-KOL Co., Ltd.
(Dept. R.25), 40 Blenheim Road, Upper Holloway, N.19

MR. RALPH LYNN, the well-known actor writes: "I consider 'Shavex' really splendid for shaving. It leaves the face soft and sweet, also removes the beard better than any shaving soap."

HURLINGHAM

STORE SHEDS FROM 4/6 DOWN



L.	W	E	R	Cash	Dep.	12 Pts.	Floor extra.
6	4	5	6	45/-	4/6	3/11	10/6
8	5	5	6½	65/-	5/6	5/9	14/6
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12	7	5	7	100/-	8/-	8/11	36/6
14	7	5	7	115/-	8/6	10/4	42/-
16	8	6	8	175/-	10/-	15/11	52/6

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7 7	4 9	4 2	6 6	58/-	4/-	5/3
8 7	6 9	4 2	7 6	79/-	4/6	7/3
9 7	6 9	4 2	7 6	100/-	5/-	9/3
11 8	6 9	5 2	8 6	131/6	7/-	12/1
14 9	8 10	5 2	9 7	163/-	9/-	15/-

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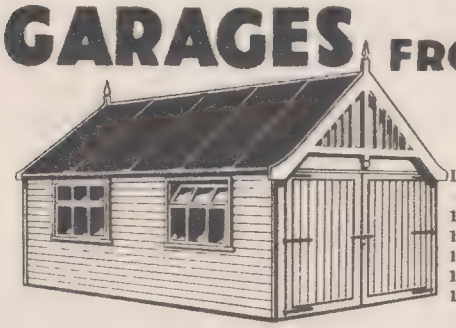

L	W	E	R	Cash	Dep.	12 Pts.	Floor extra
8	6	6	7½	77/6	5/-	7/-	17/6
10	7	6	8	112/6	7/-	10/2	29/6
11	7	6	8	117/6	7/-	10/8	32/6
12	7	6	8	122/6	7/6	11/1	36/6
14	7	6	8	137/6	8/-	12/6	42/-
16	8	6	8	187/6	12/6	16/11	52/6

ASBESTOS GARAGES FROM 6/6 DOWN

L	W	E	R	Cash	Dep.	12 Pts.	Floor extra
8	6	6	7½	97/6	6/6	8/10	17/6
10	7	6	8	132/6	8/-	12/-	29/6
11	7	6	8	137/6	8/6	12/6	32/6
12	7	6	8	142/6	9/-	12/11	36/6
14	8	6	8	182/6	12/6	16/5	45/-
16	8	6	8	207/6	15/-	18/7	52/6

GARDEN SHEDS FROM 2/- DOWN

L	W	E	R	Cash	Dep.	12 Pts.	Floor extra.
4	3	5	6	25/-	2/-	2/3	6/-
6	4	5	6	40/-	4/-	3/6	10/6
8	5	5	6¼	60/-	5/-	5/4	14/6
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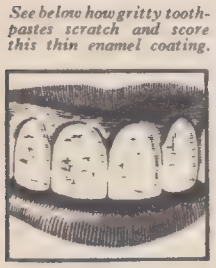
Tooth Decay

See below how gritty tooth-pastes scratch and score this thin enamel coating.



These teeth are safe from damage. No scratching here—thanks to Odol.

Don't wear your 'Safety Coat' away

Think! Less than a hair's breadth of enamel protects your teeth from decay at the gum line. Yet some tooth pastes only whiten teeth by using abrasives which wear that thin protective film of enamel away!

You can easily prove if your present tooth paste is safe. Compare it with one which dentists say is the finest and smoothest of all—Odol. Get a tube of Odol to-day (or send coupon for free sample). Put both to the Bite Test. Grind a little between your front teeth. If your present paste seems the least bit gritty don't take chances any longer. It is because it is so safe that dentists recommend Odol.

Odol can be obtained as Tooth Paste or Solid Dentifrice. There is also Odol Mouthwash and Odol Denture Powder.

Odol

Free Sample. *Post in unsealed envelope (½d. stamp) to Cranbux Ltd. (Dept. P.S.1), Norwich, for free tube of Odol. This applies to Gt. Britain and N. Ireland.* **BLOCK CAPITALS** *please!*

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Pain after meals?

IF your life is being made miserable by distressing heartburn, flatulence, sick headache and pain after meals, then follow the example of Nurse Jennings, of Weston, who writes:

"I was a great sufferer with heartburn and pains after eating, and I dreaded mealtimes . . . After taking 'Bisurated' Magnesia I can now eat anything without discomfort."

Your first dose of 'Bisurated' Magnesia will stop the stomach pain; take it after meals and you'll forget you ever had indigestion. 'Bisurated' Magnesia is used and recommended by doctors everywhere . . . you simply cannot buy a better stomach remedy. Get a bottle today. Prices: Powder, 1/3 & 2/6. Tablets, 6d., 1/3 & 2/6.

You want 'Bisurated' Magnesia

at Boyd, there was an expression of the most intense dislike. But the look didn't seem to worry Boyd. His mind was too occupied just then.

"I suppose," Parnell sneered, "if you had your way, you'd pull down the farm and have one of those modern animal factories installed in its place?"

"I certainly intend to modernise it completely," Boyd said. "With your permission, of course."

Parnell scowled.

"You believe in all these new-fangled ideas, don't you, Boyd?"

"I most certainly do," Boyd agreed, emphatically.

He *did*. Boyd had no time for anything which bore the taint of old-fashionedness. Boyd had an up-to-date mentality. He believed in progress. In the rush and efficiency of this modern age.

Modernity was the ruling passion of Boyd's life.

"Well, I don't," Parnell growled. "Never have done. Give me the good old days. . . . Folk were happy, then. Far happier than they are now. The old ideas were the best, Boyd; and, to my way of thinking, they *still* are."

"Rubbish," said Boyd, heatedly.

"This Modern Madness," Parnell said, growlingly, "for that's what it is. . . . Speed. Efficiency. Progress. . . . The March of Civilisation. Well, where's it gettin' us? Tell me that. Poison gas. Aeroplanes. The incessant threat of war. . . . This modernity of yours, Mr. Boyd, is demoralising society, the world. Look at the divorce courts. You never had such goings-on in the old days, not like it is now. Why, in those times, a man was thought entitled to beat his wife, if she deserved a beating. Now, you daren't put a finger on your wife, no matter what game she may be playin' behind your back."

"If that's one of your arguments," Boyd was starting to say, almost savagely, when Parnell stopped him.

"Maybe," said Parnell, rather surprisingly, "I *am* a bit old-fashioned, after all. All right, Mr. Boyd, go ahead and do your damnedest. . . ."

It was Candida's birthday. Parnell, somewhat grudgingly, had given her a cheque for five pounds—and advised her to put it into her savings' account.

Boyd was waiting in the long passage as she came from the living-room.

He beckoned her, smilingly.

"Come and see," he breathed.

She followed him into the sitting-room. And suddenly her eyes opened tremendously wide, her red lips parted and her face seemed to catch a kind of light in it—an almost *unearthly* light which fascinated Boyd, drove him to the edge of his endurance.

"Why, it's a clock," she exclaimed.

"Yes," he said, "an *electric* clock, Candida."

It was the first time Boyd had ever called her by her christian name, but Candida was too excited to notice that.

"For—for *me*?" she said.

"For you," Boyd smiled.

Her eyes grew warm, shining.

"It was a sweet thought, Alec," she said; and then suddenly she was in his arms and his lips were upon hers in a long, hungry kiss. . . .

Gently, after a time, she drew herself from his arms. Boyd heard her go out into the passage, quickly. She neither looked at him nor spoke; and yet he had the idea that she was not so angry, or shocked, as she might have been. . . .

The workmen had just finished installing the electric light. Parnell was walking morosely across the yard. There was neither pleasure nor gratification in his face.

Boyd grinned. He was thinking of what the salesman had said when he bought the clock:

"It's a really excellent time-keeper, sir. These electric clocks are far superior, in the way of accuracy, to the old-fashioned ones."

And Boyd had smiled at him in the most friendly manner, sensing perhaps a kindred spirit. . . .

That was the first kiss; others, just as sweet and full of passion, followed.

And Parnell began to drink heavily. Sometimes it was early morning when he came home. Boyd would sit at his bedroom window watching the dark meadows, a fixed, *still* look in his eyes.

Maybe Parnell *knew*; but it was one thing to know and quite another thing to *prove*.

And Boyd would grin behind Parnell's back, thinking what a fool Parnell was—and how short a time on earth was still left to him.

One night it started to rain heavily. Parnell had gone off towards Brambling village, on foot. Candida stood looking out of the window at the pelting, hissing rain.

Boyd watched her in a furtive manner. He was oddly, quietly excited. He had a feeling that *this* was the night. . . .

Across the passage the electric clock chimed half-past eleven. Boyd listened until the silvery notes had died away. Then he rose, yawning, and said: "Think I'll turn in. . . ."

He went slowly up the stairs to his room, shut the door and sat down to wait.

He heard the old woman come upstairs, heard Candida call out good night. Presently, Candida, too, was climbing the stairs. He heard her door close. The farmhouse grew quiet; almost uncannily quiet.

Only, through the quietness, he heard the clock downstairs chiming. . . .

And Boyd sat at the window, looking across those dark, rain-swept fields—looking for Parnell.

It was past four in the morning when Parnell came staggering down the lane. Boyd couldn't see him distinctly; merely a swaying, eerie shape in the rain-swept gloom.

With extreme stealth Boyd opened his door and listened. The place was still as the grave. In his stockinged feet he slipped downstairs, switched on the light in the kitchen. The fire was still burning; it was usually left to burn all night during the winter.

Boyd stirred it into a blaze. He got a bottle of whisky from the cellar and stood it on the table, with a couple of glasses. Then he opened the kitchen door and waited for Parnell.

Soaked to the skin he was, his eyes bloodshot and ugly, his mouth all hung open. . . .

Boyd stared at him in cold, calculating disgust.

"Hallo," Parnell said, stopping in his tracks and almost tumbling over in the yard, "what the hell do you think you're up to?"

Boyd threw a glance up at the dark farm windows. The wind was shrieking through the out-houses, the rain hissing down. Boyd had selected his time wisely.

"Shut up," he said to Parnell, so savagely that the big, heavy man jerked up his head to stare at him in stupid, bewildered surprise. "Come on into the kitchen, can't you?" Boyd said. "I had to get the sheep in from the Cutting. They were up to their eyes in it with all this rain."

Parnell fell heavily into a chair.

"Where's my wife?" he demanded, thickly.

"In bed, of course," Boyd said, "where the devil d'you think she'd be at this hour of the morning?"

"Give me a drink," Parnell said.

Boyd filled the two glasses, handed one to Parnell.

He heard the clock strike half-past four.

Boyd carefully refilled Parnell's glass.

Parnell emptied the second glass in the same fashion as he had done the first.

"Better go steady with that whisky," cautioned Boyd.

"You mind your own damned business," Parnell said. "Whose whisky is it, anyhow?"

Parnell was reaching for the half-empty bottle when suddenly the light went out.

"What's that?" Parnell said, startled.

Boyd stood there, stiffly.

"Must be something wrong at the power station," he said. "Only a temporary breakdown, you know."

"Temporary breakdown, eh? Might be mighty awkward, all the same . . ." Parnell leered drunkenly; his eyes were starting to shut. "Thought nothin' ever went wrong with your modern contrivances," he sneered. His voice stopped, grew to a mumble, died away; his head lolled forward on his chest.

Boyd stood there in the darkness, staring down at him, while the black winds shrieked and screamed about the lonely farmstead and the rain splashed and pelted against the windows.

Suddenly the light came on again.

Boyd drew a sharp breath.

"Parnell," he said, "*Parnell*. . . ."

But Parnell continued to sleep, snoring, his mouth wide open. Boyd shook him roughly, but Parnell was too far gone. He was out for the count.

Boyd glanced at his watch. It said two minutes to five. It would take him exactly five minutes to reach the bend in the lane, across the meadow, pushing the hand-cart which he had put ready in the barn across the yard. At ten minutes past the hour, or within a second or two, that heavy milk truck would come rushing along the lane, gathering speed for the climb up the hill.

And if Parnell were found there, in the mud, with the life beaten out of him and a smashed whisky bottle in his pocket . . . .Well, why should anyone doubt that Parnell had fallen in a drunken stupor in the roadway and been killed as he lay there?

But he must make sure of the time. He heard, suddenly, the clock in the sitting-room chime. Five o'clock. . . . Boyd started a little. His wrist-watch said it was four minutes past the hour—time to make a start. He went silently into the living-room and looked at the electric clock. The minute hand was just gliding off the figure twelve. His own watch must be fast.

He set it by the clock in the living-room, went back to the kitchen and waited, his eyes fixed on Parnell. When his watch showed the time to be precisely four minutes past five, he put his hands under Parnell's armpits and dragged him out of the kitchen into the yard. It was a bit of a job getting such a heavy man on to the truck, but Boyd managed it with amazing quickness.

Next instant he was pushing the truck across the meadow, through the mud. The rain, he knew, would almost instantly wipe away any traces he might make. It was coming down in a tropical deluge and so intensely dark he couldn't see more than a few feet in front of him.

He reached the lane. It was exactly nine minutes past five by his watch. He tilted the truck and something rolled heavily into the muddy roadway. . . . Parnell gave a kind of jerk and his eyes opened, and Boyd, seizing the bottle he had brought, struck him over the head with it. . . .

Parnell dropped back into the mud again, and Boyd flung the bottle down beside him.

He trundled the truck into the empty barn, swiftly removed the wheel which he had put on the day before, and hurried back through the rain and blackness to the farmhouse. He washed and wiped the glasses, shut off the light and went silently upstairs again. The place seemed as quiet as the grave. . . .

How long that weird quietness lasted Boyd never quite knew; but suddenly, downstairs, a door slammed with awful violence. He heard the crash of a chair, as if it had been hurled in mad fury against the wall.

Boyd, white-faced, leapt out of bed.

Then, stiff with some terrible fear, he paused.

Someone was stumbling and swearing up the stairs.

Candida's door was flung open. He heard her cry out in startled horror.

Next instant Boyd's door crashed wide open—and there, his bloodshot eyes all ablaze, a shot-gun in his hands, stood Parnell.

He looked so terrible as he stood there that Boyd's knees almost gave way under him.

"You murderin' swine," Parnell shouted. "Put me in the mud to be mangled, would you? So's you could get the farm and my wife, eh? Well, somethin' went wrong with your calculations."

"What—what do you mean?" Boyd stammered.

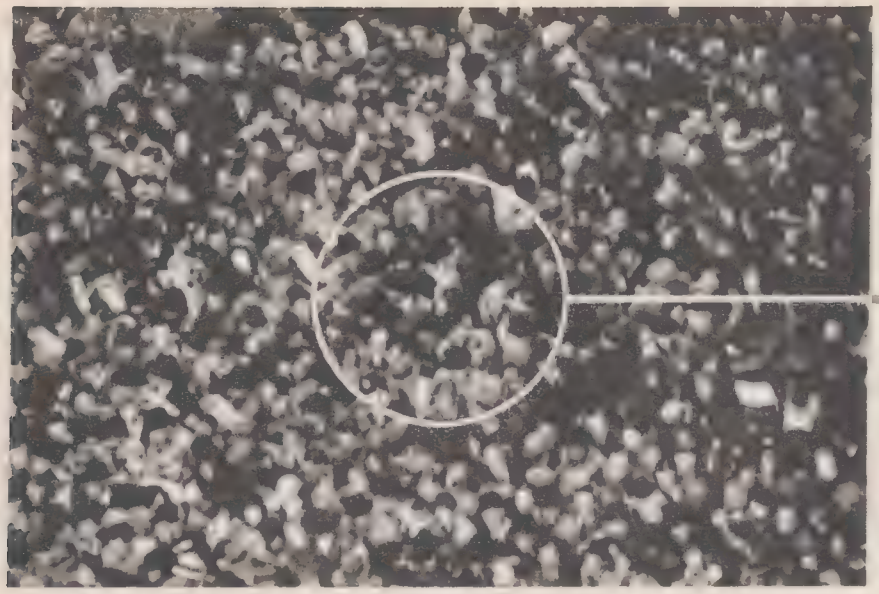
"When you dumped me in the mud just now," Parnell said savagely, "*the milk truck had already gone by.*"

Boyd stared. Crazily. Without comprehension.

And then, in a flash, he understood.

When the current had failed and the light had gone out, the clock in the sitting-room had stopped. Four minutes. . . . With an old-fashioned clock such a thing could never have happened.

And even as he pressed the trigger of the shot-gun and Boyd crashed to the floor, Parnell found himself wondering what on earth had made Boyd laugh in that mirthless, insane fashion. It seemed to Parnell rather meaningless. . . .



If you want to be rich and famous, all you have to do is to get an idea—an idea with a difference, something new, something that almost everyone will want, something within the reach of the average man and woman

MAN WITH AN IDEA

BY H. HARVEY DAY

NO need for exceptional brilliance. Leaving out the millionaires, one thousand people in Britain possess more than £100,000, and a hundred thousand have an income of £2,000 a year. Most of them are people who have put ideas into practice.

Sit down and think. Look round the house. The way you live is far from perfect; can you make your life easier and your wife's work more simple? When somebody decided to put heads on pins the idea made him a fortune. You can do the same.

While trudging over the Yorkshire moors one day, a piece of iron became wedged in the sole of one of John Blakey's boots. As he could not get it off with his fingers, he let it stay there and weeks later, when his boots needed repairing, he discovered that the portion in which the iron was wedged was as good as ever. He made little pieces of iron to nail over the soles of boots, making footwear last five times as long and he died worth £290,000.

You do not need a university education to give you brain-waves. They come to most of us occasionally—sometimes as the germ of an idea, a hint that must be developed. Dr. Elihu Thomson, one of the world-famous Thomson-Houston Company, was once a lecturer in the United States. In the course of a talk he grasped a flask of liquid by the neck and whirled it round and round. When he looked at it later on there was some sediment at the bottom which seemed to be settling towards the outside of the flask.

In a flash an idea struck him. If milk were treated in the same way the cream in it would fly to the outside of the flask. In a few days he perfected his idea and invented a milk separator on the principle of centrifugal force. It was the beginning, the nucleus of an immense fortune all made by ideas from his ever-fertile brain.

He was helped by his scientific training, but often considerable knowledge is a drawback. When ideas tumble over themselves in your brain you are apt to say, "This is much too simple. If there was anything in it someone would have spotted it long ago." Your knowledge builds obstacles. The simplest things, the most obvious ideas—are overlooked.

About forty years ago a man named O'Sullivan was working in a factory where the vibration was so terrific that he brought along a rubber mat on which to stand. After a few days someone stole it. He bought another and that was stolen—and the third.

"I'll chate the thaveing divil," he swore, and nailed two pieces of rubber to the heels of his boots. They absorbed the vibration so well that he patented the idea and to-day his firm make more rubber heels than any in the world.

It is no use saying that every good idea in the world has already been exploited. Look round you. There must be something in the room you are in that needs improving and would bring a fortune. A carelessly uttered remark of dissatisfaction may be your clue. It was so with Pierre Grantaire.

"If only wines could be made to look as old as they are, I'd make a fortune," he heard a wine merchant say to a friend. "But when the bottle is brought to the table it is wiped clean and there is no telling whether it is an old vintage or a new."

This set Grantaire thinking. Old age associates itself with cobwebs and it is not a big jump from cobwebs to spiders. So he learnt all about spiders and now breeds them for wine merchants who place them on the racks in their cellars, where they spin webs over bottles to produce a really aged appearance. Pierre is a rich man, too.

One morning a man walked into the office of a manufacturer of matches.

"I've an idea," he explained, "that will save you at least £20,000 a year. I'll sell it to you for an annual income of £1,000 for the rest of my life."

The match king was polite.

"We employ experts to shave costs down to a minimum, so whatever your idea is, it couldn't be much good. Good-day." And he pressed his bell.

But the man with the brainwave was persistent. He returned again and again, but they threw him out each time. Ultimately they decided that it was easier to give him a hearing, so he arrived with his lawyer.

"Your bright experts have overlooked one little point," he told them. "You've got sandpaper on both sides of your boxes, but I've proved that one side is sufficient." And he pulled out dozens of used boxes from a case he carried, to convince them.

"I've picked these up in the streets and, as you spend £40,000 a year on sandpaper, my idea will cut your costs in half."

"Do I get my £1,000 a year?" he asked; and they had to admit that he had backed a winner.

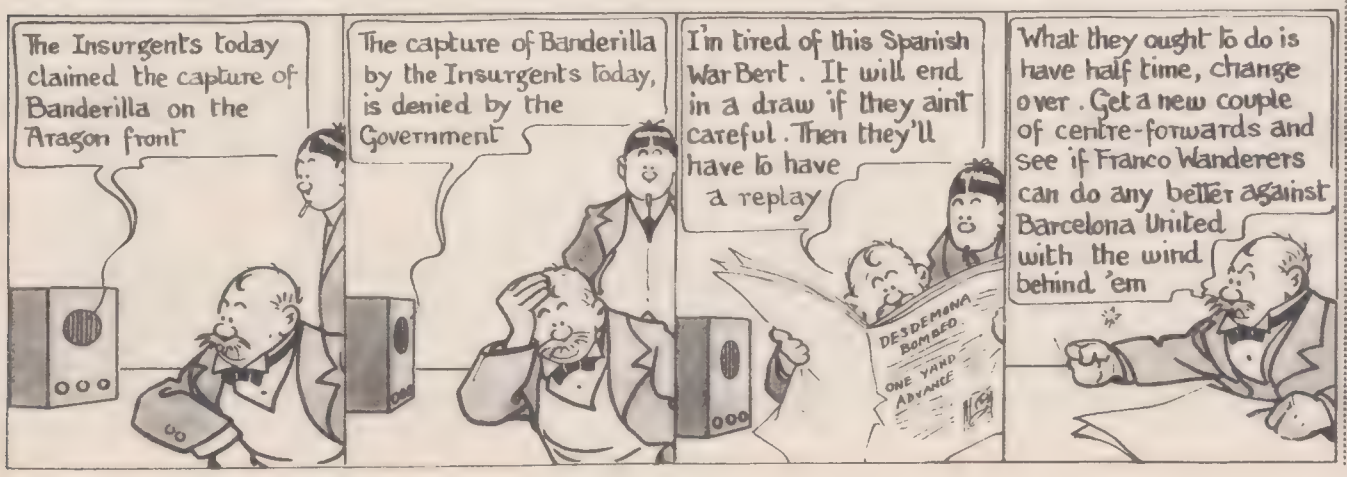
There are hundreds of men in Britain who produce little gadgets for their personal convenience. Many of these are extremely clever, and, if placed on the market, would reap rich rewards for their inventors.

There was a man named Lipman, in Philadelphia, who could never remember to carry his rubber eraser. Yet he was always making mistakes that had to be scratched out. He was a neat, methodical fellow and this made him angry, so he cut out a piece of rubber and stuck it on the end of his pencil.

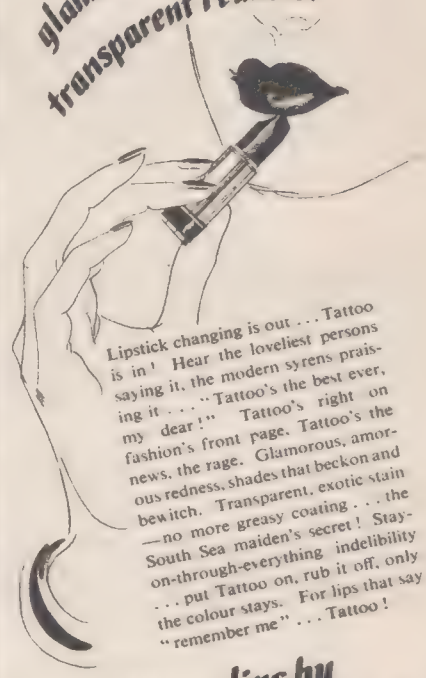
The idea worked so well that he patented it and soon made more money than he could spend. Nothing brilliant about it; merely something that everybody wanted.

By the way, there is one little point you must not forget if ever you think of an idea that will make the world sit up. Don't be like Mr. G. D. Brown, who invented the starched linen collar. It proved a perfect boon to mankind, in fact nearly everyone uses it, but he forgot to patent it, so someone else reaped the fruits of his work.

OLD BILL AND BERT — by BRUCE BAIRNSFATHER



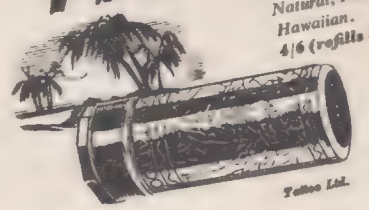
Lips that say "Remember me" glamorous, amorous, transparent redness!



Lipstick changing is out . . . Tattoo is in! Hear the loveliest persons saying it, the modern syrens praising it . . . "Tattoo's the best ever, my dear!" Tattoo's right on fashion's front page. Tattoo's the news, the rage. Glamorous, amorous redness, shades that beckon and bewitch. Transparent, exotic stain—no more greasy coating . . . the South Sea maiden's secret! Stay-on-through-everything indelibility . . . put Tattoo on, rub it off, only the colour stays. For lips that say "remember me" . . . Tattoo!

So lovely are lips by TATTOO

Coral, Exotic, Natural, Pastel, Hawaiian. 4/6 (refills 3/6)



Tattoo Ltd.

LIGHT FAIR-HAIRED

Girls Have 47% More Sex-Appeal Than Dark "Fairs"

RECENT scientific tests made show that fair-haired girls have 47% more sex-appeal than dark "fairs." But how many fair-haired girls know how to keep their hair beautifully light—prevent its going dark.

Dark hair is coarse and strong; fair hair, fine and delicate. Yet every day some fair-haired girls use ordinary soap or soapless (soap substitute) shampoos. No wonder the lovely lights in their hair darken! What they need is Sta-blond, the shampoo made specially for fair hair. **It not only prevents light fair hair from darkening but washes darkened hair two to four shades lighter—gives it the golden beauty of childhood.** No other dye-less shampoo does this.

Sta-blond contains "ViteF," the amazing Hair-Vitamin which Nature puts in all fair hair and which ordinary shampoos wash away. That's why Sta-blond not only prevents brittleness and dandruff, but makes the hair and scalp gloriously soft and supple. If you want a bleach, *don't* buy Sta-blond: but if you want to keep your hair lovely and light as Nature intended, it's the only shampoo to use. Try it just once—try it to-day!

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FREE! TRY STA-BLOND TODAY AT OUR EXPENSE *Post this coupon, Sta-blond Laboratories Ltd.*, Dept. PAS.39, 10 Henrietta St., London, W.1, *for free packet of Sta-blond Shampoo for fair hair.*

NAME

ADDRESS

Enclose 2d. in stamps for postage

CATTLE COUNTRY TROUBLE

Continued from page 7

Creek, and presently they came back with nothing left. With their wives sitting in the wagons, old from work, with their children long and thin from lack of food.

They had always failed and always would. Blount was a good man, but so were most of the rest. Why should he be thinking of Joe Blount?"

He rose at one o'clock, feeling the heat and feeling his age; and washed his hands and face with good cold water. Lighting a cigar he strolled back down Arapahoe and went into the saloon, though not to drink.

"Nick," he said, "Joe Blount been in for a drink yet?"

The saloon keeper looked up from an empty poker table. "No," he said.

McKercher went out, crossing to Billy Saxton's feed store.

"You know Joe Blount well?"

"Yes, he's all right. Used to ride for Hat. He was in here a while back."

"To buy feed?"

"No, he wanted to haul wood for me."

McKercher went back up the street towards the bank. Jim Benbow was coming down the road from the Two Dance hills, kicking a long streamer of dust behind. Joe Blount came out of the stable and turned over towards the Cattle King, waiting for Benbow.

In the bank, McKercher said to his son: "All right, you go eat," and sat down at his pine desk

He sat quite still at the desk, stern with himself because he could not recall why he kept thinking of Joe Blount. Men were everything to McKercher who watched them pass along this street year in and year out, studied them with his sharp eyes and made his judgments concerning them. If there were something in a man, it had to come out. And what was it in Joe Blount he couldn't name?

Blount met Jim Benbow on the corner of the Cattle King. He shook Benbow's hand, warmed and pleased by the tall cattleman's smile of recognition. Benbow said: "Been a long time since I saw you. How's Christmas Creek, Joe?"

"Fine—just fine. You're lookin' good. You don't get old."

"Well, let's go have a little smile on that."

"Why, thanks, no. I was wonderin'. It's pretty quiet on my place right now. Not much to do till spring. You need a man?"

Benbow shook his head. "Not a thing doing, Joe. Sorry."

"Of course—of course," murmured Blount. "I didn't figure there would be."

He stood against the Cattle King's low porch rail after Benbow had gone down the street, his glance lifted and fixed on the smoky light of the desert beyond town. He was quickly thinking of places that might be open for a man, and knew there were none in town and none on the range. This was the slack season of the year. The children were over in front of the grocery store, stopped by its door, hand in hand and their round, dark cheeks lifted and still. Blount swung around, cutting them out of his sight.

Suddenly, Ben Drury came out of the courthouse and passed Blount, removing his cigar and speaking, and replacing the cigar again. Its smell was like acid biting at Blount's jaw corners and suddenly he faced the bank with the odd and terrible despair of a man who had reached the end of hope; and a strange thought came to him, which was that the doors of that bank were wide open and money lay on the counter inside for the taking. He stood very still, his head down, and after a while he thought: "An unseemly thing for a man to hold in his head." It was two o'clock then and he turned, going towards the bank with his legs springing as he walked and all his muscles loose. In the quietness of the room his boots dragged up odd sound. He stood by Lane McKercher's desk, waiting without any show of expression; a big, bronzed man with blue eyes and eyebrows bleached white by strong sun. He knew what McKercher would say.

McKercher said, slowly and with an odd trace of irritation: "Joe, you're wasting your time on Christmas Creek. And you'd waste the loan."

Blount said, mildly and courteously: "I can understand your view. Don't blame you for not loanin' without security." He looked over McKercher's head, his glance going through the window to the far strip of horizon. "Kind of difficult to give up a thing," he mused. "I figured to get away from ridin' for other folks and ride for myself. Well, that was why we went to Christmas Creek. Maybe a place the kids could have later. Man wants his children to have somethin', better than he had."

"Not on Christmas Creek," said McKercher.

"Maybe, maybe not," said Blount. "Bad luck don't last forever." Then he said: "Well, I shouldn't be talkin'. I thank you for your time." He put on his hat; and his big hand moved up across his shirt, to the pocket there—and dropped away. He turned to the door.

"Hold on," said Lane. "Hold on a minute." He waited till Blount came back to the desk. He opened the desk's drawer and pulled out a can of cigars, holding them up. "Smoke?"

There was a long delay, and it was strange to see the way Joe Blount looked at the cigars, with his lips closely together. He said, his voice dragging on the words, "I guess not, but thanks."

Lane McKercher looked down at the desk, his expression breaking out of its maintained strictness. The things in a man had to come out, and he knew now why Joe Blount had stayed so long in his mind. It made him look up. "I have been considering this. It won't ever be a matter of luck on Christmas Creek. It's a matter of water. When I passed the feed store to-day I noticed a second-hand windmill in the back. It will do. You get hold of Plummer Bodry and find out his price for driving you a well. I never stake a man unless I stake him right. We will figure the three hundred, and whatever it takes to put up a tank and windmill. When you buy your supplies to-day, just say you've got credit here."

"Why, now——" began Joe Blount in his slow, soft voice, "I——"

But Lane McKercher said to his son, just coming back from lunch: "I want you to bring your ledger over here." He kept on talking and Joe Blount, feeling pushed out, turned and left the bank.

McKercher's son came over. "Made that loan after all. Why?"

McKercher said only: "He's a good man, Bob." But he knew the real reason. A man that smoked always carried his tobacco in his shirt pocket. Blount had kept reaching, out of habit, for something that wasn't there. Well, a man like Blount loved this one small comfort and never went without it unless actually destitute. But Blount wouldn't admit it and had been too proud to take a free cigar. Men were everything—and the qualities in them came out sooner or later, as with Blount. A windmill and water was a good risk with a fellow like that.

Hester watched him cross the square and come towards her, walking slowly, with his shoulders squared. She patted the baby's back and gently rocked it and wondered at the change. When he came up, he said, casually: "I'll hitch and drive around to the store so we can load the stuff you buy."

She watched him carefully, so curious to know how it had happened. But she only said:

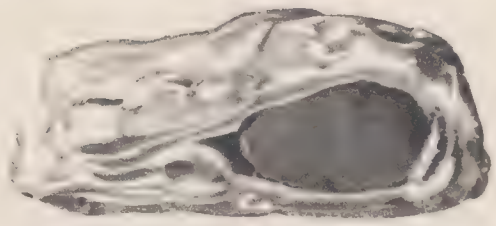
"We'll get along."

He was smiling then, he who seldom smiled. "I guess you need a few things for yourself. We can spare something for that."

"Only a dress and some ribbon, for May. A girl needs something nice." She paused, and afterwards added, because she knew how real his need was. "Joe, you buy yourself some tobacco."

He let out a long, long breath. "I believe I will," he said. They stood this way, both gently smiling. They needed no talk to explain anything to each other. Hardship and trouble had drawn them so close together that words were unnecessary. So they were silent, remembering so much, and understanding so much, and still smiling. Presently he turned to hitch up.

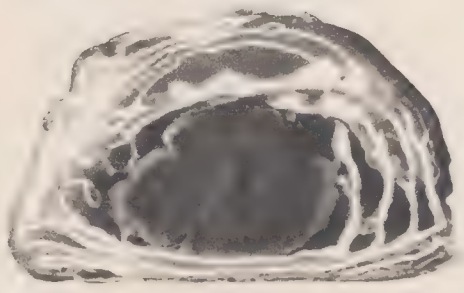
Both flaky pastry—
but what a difference



She tried and tried—but her pastry was always heavy . . .

but now

she's got "A Lesson in Pastry Making"—and her pastry is as light as a feather



This FREE booklet, written by Susan Croft, is just what you've been looking for! It contains clear instructions for making every kind of pastry, and heaps of other useful information. But perhaps you will think the most interesting part is right at the end. There you will find a list of the things that often go wrong with pastry, the reasons *why* they go wrong, and the correct way to avoid each fault.

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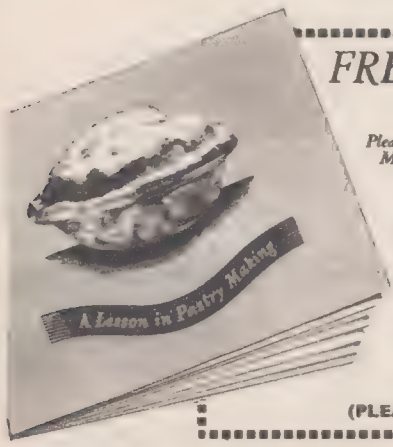
Let Susan Croft help you—it's a great opportunity to show the family what you can do! Fill in the coupon for your FREE booklet and post it AT ONCE.



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—Judgment	**—Self-Confidence**
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—Decision	**—Reliability**
—Resourcefulness	**—Business Acumen**

and a Reliable Memory.

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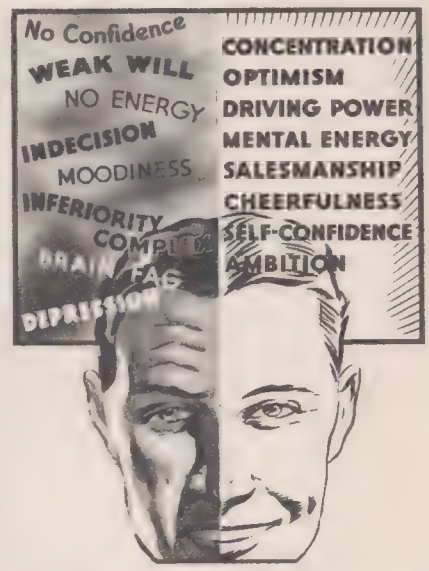
ARE YOU ONLY HALF THE MAN YOU WISH TO BE?



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NOT WITHOUT WEIGHT

You'd have to be mighty quick to catch up with Daniel Ford if there were a horse deal on; just see what happened to Peter Horton

BY GILBERT HORSLER

ILLUSTRATED BY S. TRESILIAN

FARMING'S a rotten game, and market gardening's worse. If I send a couple of hundred bags of peas to Covent Garden . . . what do I get out of 'em? Lucky if it's the price of the carriage and the cost of the sacks. Beans is worse, and as for 'spuds,' it's sheer waste of time to grow 'em. No, Dan! Agriculture is a poor game these days, and it's no wonder that we are all broke, with not two ha'pennies to rub together in our pockets." From the open bar window Peter Horton looked sombrely out over the rich, lush fields of the Bedfordshire pasture lands.

Daniel Ford shook a despondent head. "You're dead right, Peter," he agreed. "I'm danged if I know where to look for a crust of bread these days. . . . What's yours? Same again?" He turned to the barman: "Two double Scotches, George, and a couple of cigars . . . the one and ninepenny ones. Those eighteenpenny smokes taste like seaweed."

Mutual misfortune is the strongest of all bonds and, in twin commiseration, the two smallholders shared a silent fellowship as, cigars fragrantly alight, they reflectively sipped their whiskies. At a sudden thought:

"Wouldn't like to buy that chestnut of mine, Peter?" suggested Dan. "You're getting too heavy for that little thirteen-hand bay mare of yours. I'll take forty guineas from you as a favour to a pal, although he's worth every penny of sixty." With a nod he indicated the tall saddle horse that was affectionately nibbling the arched neck of the small mare, which destiny—and their masters—had tied to the same hitching post.

Peter Horton turned a reproachful eye on his companion: "Dan," he commenced, in a slow deliberation, which, however rose to a crescendo of indignation as the memory of past injustices overwhelmed him, "I bought a horse from you ONCE. A grey gelding it was, if you remember. You said it was good enough to win the Grand National and it broke your heart to part with it. Well

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TRAVEL LMS CHEAP FARES EXPRESS SERVICES

It was at his last, steep hedge that Dan himself met with disaster. Driving his horse desperately with whip and spur, he took the jump over-hurriedly

it didn't win the Grand National. It couldn't have won a point-to-point race against a field of Margate donkeys. No horse could, on three legs. And if it broke your heart to cash my cheque, I don't remember any signs of it."

It took more than a little discouragement to frighten Dan Ford from a possible horse deal and he returned to the charge undismayed. "The fact that our last deal turned out unlucky for you is the very reason I am offering you the chestnut so cheaply," he invented, quickly.

"Catch you selling a horse that could win even a hurdle race, for forty guineas. In any case, my little mare is good enough for me, though I am getting a bit weighty. She'd out-run that chestnut of yours any day of the week. I'd gamble on that."

"What'll you gamble?" challenged Dan quickly, as he mentally contrasted the fifteen stones of his companion against his own lighter build. He knew the small, compact mare was a good one, but weight will tell, especially with the extra size of his own mount putting all the advantages on his side.

Normally, Peter Horton would have seen and avoided the trap, but his indignation — and the whiskey — were strong within him. He had, however, sense enough to stipulate a distance, that by its shortness, would mitigate some of the disadvantage of weight against stamina.

"I'll lay a fiver; over the last mile and a half of the old point-to-point course," he said.

"A fiver?" scoffed Dan. "You'll be racing for pennies next. Let's make a sporting bet of it. I'll take your challenge and we'll race horse against horse. The first horse past the post takes both. That is, unless you're afraid," he added cunningly.

Cornered in his boast and with the other occupants of the room—scenting a sporting match—edging him on, Horton found it difficult to retreat and, after a further argument, in which he managed to reduce the distance to a mile, the contest was signed and sealed by the unbreakable bond of a handshake.

Jogging home under a low-hung, harvest moon, Peter Horton had opportunity to reflect on his recklessness and with the return of reason coincident with the evaporation of the whiskey, the more he thought, the less he liked the prospect ahead.

Fiercely he cudgelled his brains for a plan to discomfit his old crony, and the last of the spirit coming to his aid, in a flash of inspiration he suddenly saw a solution. "Got you this time, Dan, my boy," he told a field of sweet smelling clover.

In the sporting atmosphere of the Market Gardening lands, a horse match inevitably indicates a holiday; and with Farmer Hawkins as judge and general Master of Ceremonies, a full crowd of the local produce growers turned out to witness the contest. As was natural with such a one-sided event, the betting was light, although one or two of Horton's close friends—on a hint from that gentleman himself—were casually taking threes and fours against the bay. Peter had specially warned them to be careful how they worded their wagers and the reason was made plain, when, driving a gig with the mare—ready saddled—trotting behind, he came smilingly on to the scene.

His good humour was explained by the presence of a tiny, perky youth, dressed in corduroy breeches and sweater, who sat perched in the high seat at his side. The other contestant discovered this almost as soon as he had welcomed his rival

"Morning, Dan," greeted Peter, with a sly grin. "Hope you are all ready and set for the race. This is my jockey. He's in Colin Latheran's Newmarket stable. His dad works on my ground and he's got the boy down for the day specially to ride my mare. I've promised him a fiver if he wins. Your chestnut'll be cheap at that. What's your weight, Jim?" The speaker turned to the lad at his side.

"Seven stone-two, in silk, sir. . . . A pound or so more in these togs," answered the youth cheerily.

"But damme, Peter, that's not fair," gasped Dan, as he gazed at the small rider with a bulging eye. "The stipulation was that we were each to ride our own horse."

"Not on your life," scoffed Horton. "Your own words were that the first horse past the post takes the stakes. Nothing was mentioned about riders." The speaker appealed to those among the crowd who had been present when the bet was made.

Joyfully they confirmed the statement, for there was not one of them who had not at some time or other been the victim of Dan's sharp wits.

Seeing no help for it, the outgeneralled Dan could do no other than agree, although it was with an ill grace that he climbed slowly into the saddle of his own tall mount. The neat trick of Horton had more than reversed the odds, for even the extra length of stride of the chestnut was more than offset by the big advantage in both weight and jockeyship now enjoyed by the speedy little mare.

More in hope than faith, Ford urged his horse forward at the drop of the handkerchief which acted as starter's flag, but from the first it was easy to see that his task was hopeless. Although not yet promoted to the race track, the lad from Newmarket had spent all his short life on the hard training grounds of Newmarket and, nursing the mare beautifully, he was obviously riding with plenty in hand.

It was at his last, steep hedge that Dan himself met with disaster. Driving his horse desperately with whip and spur, he took the jump over-hurriedly and, although the chestnut kept its feet, the jolt, as it landed, pitched its rider neatly on to his back in the soft grass. He was quite unhurt, but as he scrambled to his feet, had the mortification of seeing his mount galloping madly in the rear of the flying mare, leaving him to stumble afoot to the winning post.

Warned that something was amiss by the shouts of the onlookers, the stable lad cast a curious glance behind him. Spotting the riderless horse behind, he automatically reined in his own mount to let it come up; it was second nature with him to seek control of a free horse. Waiting for the runaway to draw level, he reached out a restraining hand and, collaring the loose hanging rein gradually checked its frightened gallop. So together they cantered comfortably past the waiting group of onlookers.

It was a derisive cheer that greeted the discomfited Dan, when, a few moments later, he hobbled in.

"Thought you could do it quicker afoot Dan?" laughed Peter, who was feeling immensely pleased with himself.

Dan, who had been doing some hard thinking during his short stroll, didn't answer at once. Then: "I'm not grumbling, Peter," he said. "It was worth a walk to win a race like this."

"WIN?" gasped Horton. "Why, man, you did not even finish."

"No, but the horse did," grinned Dan, "and your remember your own words of a few minutes ago. Even from where I was, I could see that my chestnut was running wither to wither with the mare when they passed the post and, with its longer neck, that means that its head must have been in front. Nothing was mentioned about riders," maliciously he repeated Horton's earlier words, as he turned to the judge for confirmation.

In a silence that made the twitter of a skylark sound noisy, he walked across to his own horse and patted its neck affectionately. "I hate to part with it, Peter," he said, with another grin. "But as you must get another horse now, I'll let you have it for thirty guineas—your mare's worth the odd ten."

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THE letters below, from one of which our heading is taken, are but a few among hundreds that are on the files of the Premier School of Journalism. They come from every part of the world, and from men and women of every class, testifying to the soundness of the teaching given.

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FROM SPARE-TIME WRITERS—

NINE YEARS AFTER TAKING A COURSE A PUPIL writes: "When I took a Course with the Premier School I did not realise that the instruction would supply me with a material income for the rest of my life. Even whilst holding down a full-time job, I have often made as much as £40 a month by free-lancing in my leisure hours."

A YOUNG BUSINESS MAN writes: "Before the Premier School's Course was completed I had the satisfaction of earning sufficient money to cover the cost of it several times over. Indeed, within twelve months of starting the Course my income from my free-lancing nearly equalled that from my regular job. Not only am I making a regular income by my pen, but I am earning it from an occupation which has no rivals in fascination and interest."

A MARRIED WOMAN LIVING ABROAD writes: "Before the end of the Course, I had begun to sell my stories, the first acceptance being by a well-known magazine, with a request to see more of my work. At the moment I have 110 published stories to my credit, and have appeared in twenty periodicals. Were I able to devote all my time to this fascinating and lucrative profession, I could double my output."

A PUPIL IN STAFFORDSHIRE writes: "During the past two years I have only put in an average of eight hours per week at my writing, and I often earn more in those eight hours than I do in a week at my normal occupation. Before I took the Course I did not know anything about writing in any way."

A MARKET GARDENER writes: "The number of articles I have had accepted is 317. I think it amply proves the fact that even if the pupil can only write about his trade or profession, if he will study the lessons you send him he can turn them into a good investment."

A SHORTHAND-TYPIST writes: "There is no doubt that Premier School training saves misspent energy and heartbreak! I am extraordinarily grateful to you for all that you have done to help me with my writing. I have found a hobby which has enlarged my mind, my circle of friends, and my bank-book."

A PUPIL IN EDINBURGH writes: "I am glad to be able to tell you that *Peter Pan* has accepted two articles, and *G.F.S.* has accepted '——' and '——.' '——' found a home straight away with the *Countryman*. All these are illustrated. Single photos with captions I have had published in the *Lady*, *Home Chat* and the *Field*. I welcome all the criticism you give, however devastating it is. I can only thank you for your wonderful letters. The idea of writing has gripped me. . . ."

A TEACHER writes: "If I had more time at my disposal I could easily treble what I now earn. Out of occasional articles and paragraphs I almost earn as much as I do in my well-paid profession of teaching. This week, for instance, I have received £6, and also three articles and five paragraphs accepted."

AN ARMY OFFICER writes: "It is by the response that you require from your pupils that you are obtaining the results you are. Since I started your Course I have earned £84. It does prove that a pupil may earn while still learning. I shall be very disappointed indeed if I am not earning £500 per annum in my spare time very shortly."

A WOMAN WITH MANY DOMESTIC DUTIES writes: "Since I enrolled with the Premier School I have had about 1,200 contributions in print. I have known what it is to write three separate articles in a single afternoon and see them all in print within a week. I have very little time for writing, but the cheques received last week for my literary work came to a total of £10 10s. 0d.'

A BAKERY MANAGER writes: "I am now sending you my last exercise. I feel that my progress whilst taking the Course has been remarkable. Your criticisms and suggestions have been not only valuable, but have made the Course most interesting. My total earnings so far are £7 16s. 6d. It is not a great sum, perhaps, but I have a good deal of work still out. I am sure, too, that if I had been able to do more writing I could have multiplied my earnings many times over. It is obvious that you have been able to show me how to make a most fascinating hobby pay. Through my writing I have also been able to make several useful business contacts. Once more, thank you."

FROM WHOLE-TIME WRITERS—

A MAN LIVING IN INDIA writes: "It would be unfair not to give you some credit for turning an unemployed man in a very difficult position into a very successful one holding down a job worth a minimum of £1,000 a year. Under your tuition I made an intense study of newspapers of all descriptions. And now, behold! I am general manager of a daily paper established 65 years ago."

A WIDOW writes: "After a few years of happily married life I found myself widowed, penniless and with no talent except that I could write interesting letters to my friends. An acquaintance introduced me to Mr. Gordon Meggy, of the Premier School of Journalism, and I borrowed the fees and started the Course. Mr. Meggy proved to be my fairy godfather. Since I commenced writing I have made over £2,000 net profit. Last year's income (net) was just over £640."

A MAN WHO HAS NOW ADOPTED STORY WRITING AS A PROFESSION writes: "It is several years since I took a Course with the Premier School of Journalism; but since then I have made a good living out of writing, and continue to do so. In 1937 I published over 300,000 words of short magazine fiction."

A MAN WHO WAS AN ENGINEER writes: "I am now free-lancing from a London office. It is a poor week when I don't make at least £12 profit. It is due to the fact that you imparted to me a knowledge of those basic factors which enable one to write saleable work."

A WOMAN WHO OBTAINED A NEWSPAPER STAFF POST writes: "I believe I could cope with any job I might be asked to do, all through the advice, tuition and help given me by Mr. Meggy. I feel that I never really lived till I had the Course. Since I paid those few guineas that opened the magic gates for me, I have earned more than £400."

A MAN WHO WAS AN ASSISTANT CHEF AT A RESTAURANT writes: "Although I was without any journalistic knowledge whatsoever when I started, at the end of my Course I was earning as much from my pen as from my regular job. I am now doing well. I am my own master and can work just as little—or as much—as I like. I have known what it is to receive cheques totalling nearly £40 in a single week. I owe my success absolutely and entirely to The Premier School of Journalism, which taught me, soundly and surely, a new profession which, unlike all others, enables the student to commence earning during the period of tuition."

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SOMETIME

So many false prophets are trying to hold the attention of the market place these days by describing the stream-lined days of all our to-morrows that we instinctively shy away from anything now that smacks of the shape of things to come.

But there are times when we get so far ahead of the passing show that we can look back, as it were, and see the things to come standing as milestones on the path we have prepared for our five hundred thousand odd followers.

We can see Savaran, gaunt, defiant, eagle-featured adventurer and hero of a hundred thousand hearts, talking gaily to his creator, Douglas Newton, about the new stories of his adventures "without the law," which begin in the spring.

Well in the foreground there is Will Scott, whose recent PASSING SHOW serial "The Man with the Umbrella" you may have seen as a film, is putting the finishing touches to a new series of short stories.

Then there are two new writers lurking in the shadows waiting to be introduced to you, Ben Traven beating George Sessions Perry by no more than the length of his braces in the race for the shelter of the no-publicity-please department. We've not seen such fine specimens of retiring talent since Great Garbo started the racket. But, oh, boy, can they write? You'll be surprised.

Meanwhile there is D. Wilson MacArthur, our old man of the sea, so busy with a new true-life thriller of the sea on the lines of "Mutiny on the Bounty" that he hasn't time to smile this way. But the laughs will be coming to him when he sees Nordhoff and Hall thinking up another hurricane in an effort to put themselves back on the map.

For the big Spring number, coming in a fortnight, there's the beginning of a serial story by Robert Ormond Case of frontier intrigue and a fight for northern gold among the trappers and prospectors of the frozen north-woods country fringing the Yukon.

YOU'RE TELLING US!

YOU'RE TELLING US! Half a guinea is paid for each letter or quotation printed on this page. Address: "Readers' Letters," "Passing Show," 93 Long Acre, London, W.C.2. Please state whether Mr., Mrs. or Miss

Except possibly for a blind faith in the efficacy of tea as a certain cure for thirst, we have never really pinned our faith to anything more supernatural than a bread poultice. So we would not be knowing a lot about the evil eye, even though we wade through quite a lot of the sordid facts of life each week, what with Uncle Joe and motor-car salesmen, glamour girls who want their "pictures in the paper," and politicians with guilt-edged memories who want to tell the truth at last—for a price.

A tendency to hiccough at times of emotional crisis has prevented our being initiated into any of the Blacker Arts, such as hypnotism, football pools, telepathy and smoking old rope. 'Tis unfortunate, for we feel our concern with other things has probably robbed us of more fun than we care to mention.

For instance, Mr. E. Kaye, of Denton, Manchester, is one up on us because he has found time to experiment with telepathy.

"Having occasion to wish to summon somebody to me from a distance of about a quarter of a mile," he says, "I put the principles of telepathy into practice and concentrated on a mental command, which I repeated and repeated to the person in question. After my exertions had partially exhausted me, you can imagine how my opinion of telepathy decreased when the person did not arrive.

"Still feeling the effects of my disappointment, I met the object of my mental stress the next day, but made no mention of my efforts. Yet his first words were: 'About eleven o'clock yesterday I felt something urging me to go to see you, but I resisted.'

"I am wondering whether my experiment was a success or an outsize in coincidences, for I have never succeeded in persuading shopkeepers to give me too much change merely by staring hard at them over the counter. It is to be hoped that the majority of us do not discover

hypnotic powers, or we may reach a dreadful state of deadlock where everyone will be hypnotised by everybody else."

Actually, we are not so sure that things are not already reaching such a pretty pass; you should see Uncle Joe sink back into his chair, as spineless as spaghetti, when Aunt Agatha has swept the room clean with a look that sends the cat out into the night with the fur forming a ridge of fear on its back. It may not be hypnotism, Mr. Kaye, but it hurts like anything!

Meanwhile, Uncle Joe is wondering whether he can get the cider to him by telepathy when he can't get to the cider by any other means.

We often think we need a load of telepathy to please some of the people some of the time. It is obvious that we can't please all the people all the time, for they are not all like Mr. R. S. Gutherson, of Holywell Village, Seaton Delaval, Northumberland, who says that during the last fifteen years the PASSING SHOW has been slowly adapting itself to his desires.

"When I first ordered PASSING SHOW,"

he says, "I was fourteen years old and its pages, at that time, contained nothing but jokes, cartoons and humorous stories, which suited me perfectly. As the years rushed past, I became more serious, feeling the need for serious articles and comments on world affairs; so the PASSING SHOW obligingly altered its contents to suit my changing tastes.

"And now I have married and settled down, the good old paper crowns its achievements by inserting a woman's page entirely for my wife."

Imagine the gravity with which we now face life, knowing full well that we are slowly going through the seven stages of life to the complete satisfaction of at least one reader.

Before making the next step, we must introduce Mr Stanley Frost, of Aberdeen, who, after voicing his opinions about our missing pages of jokes, says: "I have been reading PASSING SHOW for many years now and, as I am a fisherman and not always at home on a Friday, I always call for my PASSING SHOW when I get into port.

"I walk into my newsagent's shop, which has a barber's department in the back rooms, and shout for the 'Best Twopennorth in the place.' And the lady who usually hands over my PASSING SHOW has been telling me that several customers, canny, but intrigued by my demand, have come out of the barber's room to ask what I buy as the best twopennorth in the shop! They are now regular subscribers, and I still shout for my PASSING SHOW each week."

In fact, the satisfied readers of the PASSING SHOW might even sit down to a game of bridge one day—if they can find two more. You're telling us!

For Your Amusement

CLUES ACROSS

1. Pass through filter.
9. Time-killer.
13. Inclined, or rested on support.
14. Refutation.
16. Scottish town.
17. Take advantage of.
19. Extend or extent from point to point.
20. North of Paris.
21. Attribute of small mind.
23. Wales in a river.
25. These may be doctrinal.
26. Portioned out.
27. Accomplishment or performance.
28. Perhaps an animal in a tomato.
30. A sum asked for.
32. Should know a yarn or two.
34. Common to 16 and 39 across.
35. Rose for pagan deity.
36. Dig in.
39. Hastened.
40. Presumably beyond doubt.
41. Cut with sudden blow.
42. Large packages.
43. No peace with this.

CLUES DOWN

2. More power to this is proverbial wish.
3. Suggestion of backwardness in this naval officer.
4. Illuminant rather outdated.
5. Head and tail of 16 across.
6. Quick movement.
7. Beware of these.
8. Put in order.
9. Half of 31.
10. Rouse from reverie.
11. Fall from virtue or failure in duty.
12. Capable of extension.
15. Presumably chosen people.
16. Stones for attack.
18. Half 27 across.
22. Certain tides.
24. Qualifies for reward.
27. With greater speed.
29. Musical work.
31. Unit of measure.
33. Less would be minus.
37. May fit the bolt.
38. One-legged movement.

D	E	A	R	■	S	E	P	A	R	A	T	I	O	N
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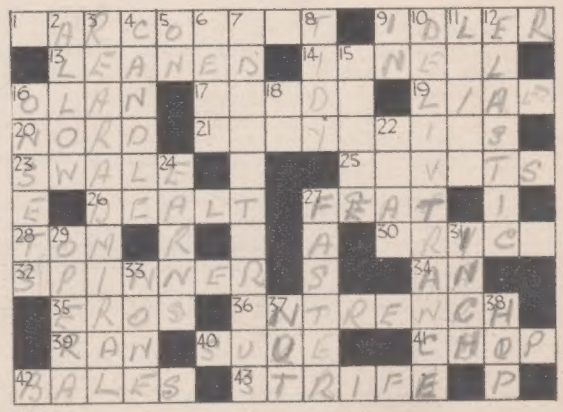
Solution to last week's puzzle



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SPRING CLEANING?

Then turn to

PAGE 23

for particulars of the Hoover Cleaning "Ensemble."

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The 1938 Edition of our Civil Service Handbook is now ready for free distribution. Those desiring details of present and future **Vacancies, Age Limits, Salaries, Promotion and Entrance Examinations** to all Branches of the Service (*Taxes, Customs, Post Office, Clerical, Engineering, L.C.C., Municipal etc.*) are advised to apply for this enlightening Handbook immediately, together with a copy of the current edition of the **Civil Service Vacancy Gazette**—*both copies Free.*
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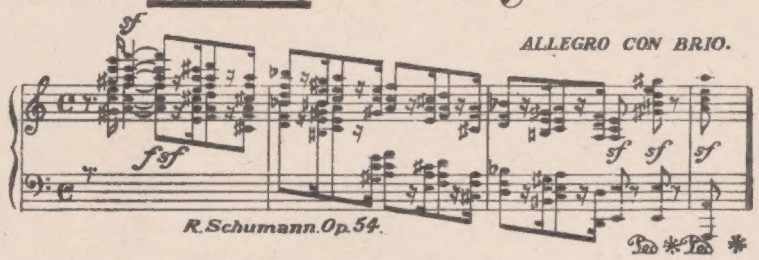
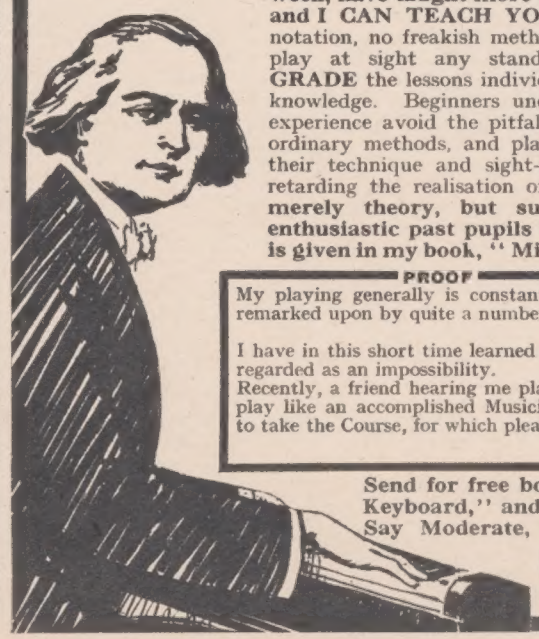
M.W.23.

Can YOU Play This?



I CAN RAPIDLY TEACH YOU TO DO SO

IF YOU ARE a Beginner or an Elementary player, certainly you **cannot.** If a Moderate or Advanced Player you will wish to master such music as this with more satisfying results. **I can rapidly teach you to do so,** according to your present knowledge, and the full limit of your ability, in a third the time, with a quarter the work, at a tenth the expense of the ordinary methods of dull, mechanical wearisome practice. You need not know a note to start. **I have enrolled 98 adult pupils this week, have taught more than 48,000 during 33 years, and I CAN TEACH YOU,** using only ordinary musical notation, no freakish methods, enabling you to read and play at sight any standard musical composition. **I GRADE** the lessons individually according to the pupil's knowledge. Beginners under the guidance of my wide experience avoid the pitfalls and wearisome drudgery of ordinary methods, and players speedily learn to perfect their technique and sight-reading, and to dispel faults retarding the realisation of their desires. **This is not merely theory, but supported by thousands of enthusiastic past pupils whose voluntary testimony is given in my book, "Mind, Muscle and Keyboard."**



PROOF

My playing generally is constantly improving—this having been remarked upon by quite a number of my relations and friends.
W. R. F. A48818. Age 26.
I have in this short time learned to play music which I previously regarded as an impossibility. M. C. L. A48184. Age 38.
Recently, a friend hearing me playing the Piano, remarked, "You play like an accomplished Musician." I feel very glad I was led to take the Course, for which please accept my grateful thanks.
E. M. A. A48591. Age 49.

Send for free booklet, "Mind, Muscle and Keyboard," and form for free advice. Say Moderate, Elementary, or Beginner.

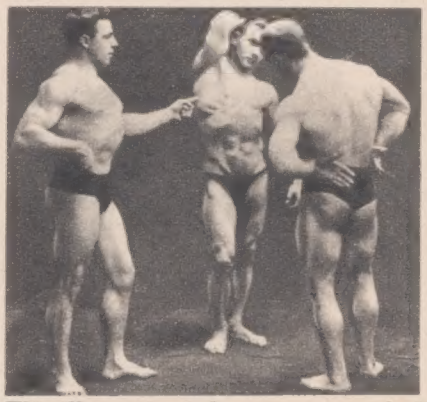
MR. H. BECKER
(Dept. 766), 69, Fleet St., E.C.4

MAXALDING

1909 — 1938

and its challenge of 1909 still unaccepted. Here it is again:—

I (Monte Saldo) am prepared to prove before any tribunal of Medical Men in open court or discussion that MAXALDING is the most convenient, the most simple, the most complete and the most effective method of Mental and Physical training ever discovered.



This illustration is from an unretouched photograph taken in 1910, proving actual results achieved by

MAXALDING WITHOUT APPARATUS

in those remote days. The three men are still athletically fit. The back pose is of A. M. Saldo, whose son's offer to the Government, published in the "Passing Show" (Jan. 1), has caused the biggest sensation for many years.

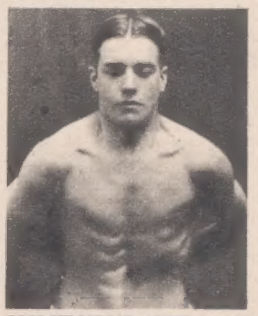
TWO EXTRACTS FROM RECENT LETTERS:

"Jan. 3, 1938. Dear Mr. Saldo,—I wonder if you would be so kind as to send me another copy of your NATURE'S WAY TO HEALTH. My reason for asking is that I never tire of reading it. My physique is still improving, my chest now measuring 40 ins. (it was 36 ins. when I first began Maxalding)."

AN INDUSTRIAL WORKER,

suffering from Neurasthenia through strenuous work and changing hours of duty took up Maxalding in May, 1937. After suffering various set-backs and difficulties, he won through and reported on Feb. 2, 1938:—
"You will be pleased to note that all my friends who had not seen me for some time noticed how broad of shoulder I have become. I know that when I have completed the full course there will be added improvement." Note: Increase of weight was 12 lb.
Note: All Maxalding testimonials are guaranteed unsolicited, genuine and unpaid for. They may not sound sensational, but as Lord Hewart said:—

TRUTH IS QUIET



This picture, taken in 1913, is the first of the single-sided isolation, without hand-pressure, ever published. The exercise, discovered by Maxalding, renders the user immune from gastric and intestinal disorders and abdominal distention, when natural diet only is used.

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NAME, ADDRESS, AGE, and OCCUPATION

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Send me, free of postage or liability, your 20,000-words illustrated explanatory treatise:—
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1. I suffer from, and desire to be cured of, Constipation, Indigestion, Nervous Debility, Weak Lungs, Fatigue, Lack of Development, Rheumatism, Obesity, Susceptibility to Colds, or
.....
2. I desire to secure Great Speed and Endurance.
3. I desire to secure Strength and Development.

NAME .....
ADDRESS .....
.....
.....
AGE..... OCCUPATION.....

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FAIR HAIR! Surely the richest jewel in the whole realm of womanhood! Such a Golden Haze of Glory as brings out romance and admiration in every man. By day a soft and lovely mist of gold—by night the focus of a thousand stars—centre of a myriad gleaming lights and shades!

As an artist touches up his picture with delicate shades and hues, so may every Fair Haired lady enrich her loveliness with the use of

"HARLENE" Camomile Golden HAIR WASH

The use of this dainty preparation is like enveloping your hair in liquid sunshine !

It gleams; it glistens, and where once may have been a drab appearance, now is born an exciting glamour—a rich new beauty to frame your features! All Fair Haired ladies whose hair has become dull and lost its tone, should try Harlene Camomile Golden Hair Wash at once and enjoy its marvellous effect.

1/3, 3/- and **5/-** per bottle

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The perfect Setting Lotion which does not darken Fair Hair. This clean and dainty preparation controls those straggling, untidy "wisps" of hair, creates deep, entrancing waves and keeps them "set" for long periods.

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(Stamp envelope with 1½d. stamp. Offer does not apply to Eire.)